THE STORY OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE

A Simple Introductory Historical Reader

BY

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AUTHOR OF

'BOYS AND GIRLS OF OTHER DAYS,' 'MEN OF RENOWN,' ETC.

WITH SIX ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR AND THIRTY-THREE IN BLACK AND WHITE

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PREFACE

This little Reader is intended to give children their first view of our history as a whole. It is, therefore, written in very simple language, and only the chief events are touched upon. It will be found useful to follow after books of stories selected from English History, and is a first concentric Historical Reader.



KING JOHN SIGNING MAGNA CHARTA.

After the painting by Ernest Normand in the Royal Exchange, London.
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THE STORY OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE

OUR LAND BEFORE THE ENGLISH CAME.

1. The English people have lived so long in our island that it seems hard to believe they have not always been here. Yet if a traveller had paid a visit to our country seventeen hundred years ago, he would have found no English in the land.

2. He would have found that the country was called Britain, and that the people who lived in it were Britons. He would have found also that the Britons were ruled by the Romans, men who came from the city of Rome, in Italy.

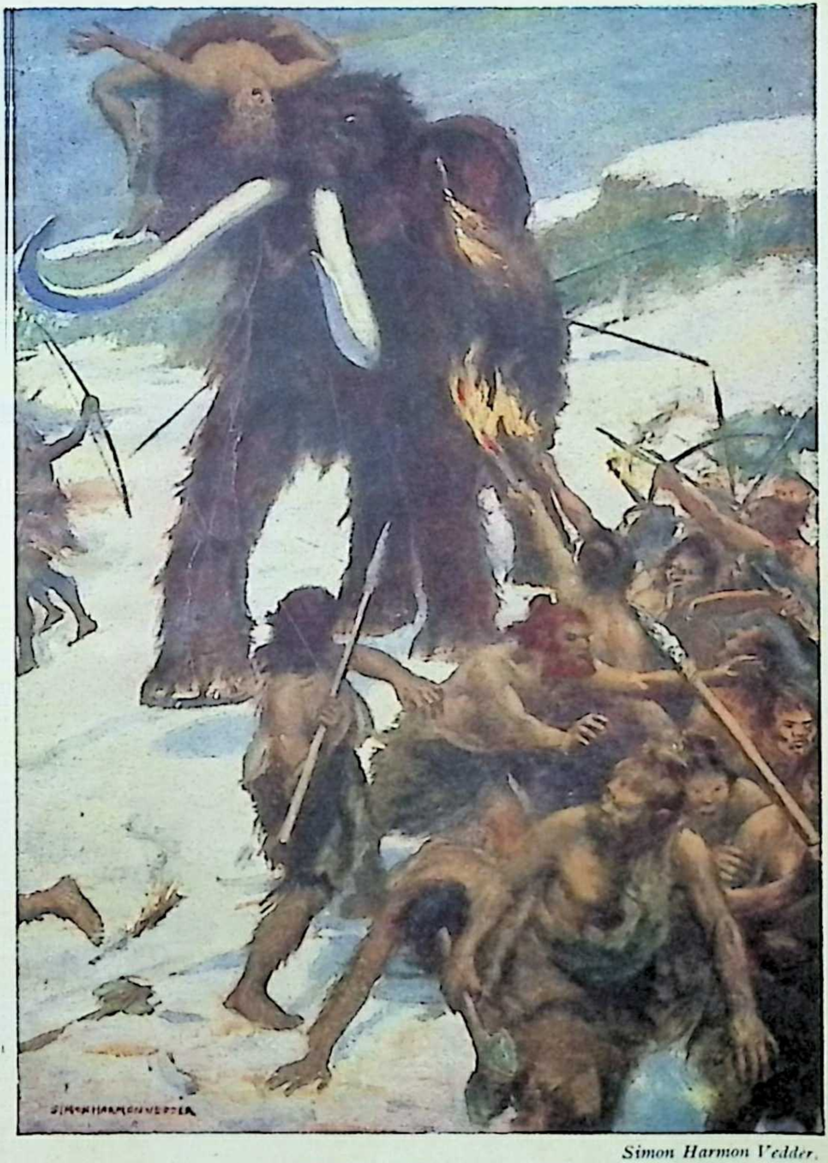
3. The Britons had been living in the country for many hundreds of years. But they were not the first people to live in our island. Before them the land was held by tribes of a race of small savages, who lived in holes and caves, and got their living by hunting and fishing. It is believed that these savages knew nothing of metals. They made

their axes and hammers of stone, and chipped hard flint into shape for the heads of their arrows and spears. They are spoken of as the Cave Men.

4. The Britons knew about metals. They made swords, knives, and spears of bronze. The Britons were divided into tribes which fought fiercely with each other. There was much difference between these tribes. Those who lived in out-of-the-way parts of the country were very rude and savage. They wore clothes of skins, lived in very poor huts, and hunted and fished for their food.

5. But in the south, where the Britons carried on trade with other countries, the people knew more. They lived in better houses, wore better clothes, and decked themselves with ornaments of gold. They reared cattle and grew corn. The chief article of their trade was tin. The tin was obtained from the mines of Cornwall, and carried in waggons to the Strait of Dover. Here the merchant ships crossed from Gaul, as France was then called, bringing traders to buy the British tin.

6. The first time the Britons saw the Romans was fifty-five years before the birth of Christ. A famous Roman general, Julius Cæsar, had overcome Gaul. He now made up his mind to cross over to Britain, and add that land to the Roman Empire.



Simon Harmon Vedder.

CAVE MEN HUNTING THE MAMMOTH.

7. He gathered a large fleet of ships filled with soldiers, and sailed to Britain. The Britons lined the shore and tried to beat the Romans back. They fought well, but in vain. The Romans were the finest soldiers in the world at that time, and the Britons were defeated.

8. Cæsar soon returned to Gaul, but the next year he came again to Britain with a much larger army. This time he marched some distance into the country and won several battles. After a time he went away, and never came back.

9. The Romans now left the Britons alone for nearly a hundred years. Then fresh armies of them came in A.D. 43, and they began to conquer Britain in earnest.

10. The Britons fought their best to drive away the Romans, but all to no purpose. For one thing, the British tribes did not join together. This made it easy for the Romans. They had only to beat one tribe at a time. It took the Romans about forty years to make themselves masters of the land. At last the fighting was over, and the Britons settled down to obey their Roman masters.

11. The Romans taught the Britons many new things, and did much for the country. They built fine towns and beautiful houses, strong walls, and

bridges over the rivers. The Romans were wonderful builders. There are in our land pieces of their brickwork as strong and good to-day as when they were put up.

12. They made splendid roads through the country. These roads were broad and solid, and ran straight from point to point, so that armies could march quickly here and there to put down a rising.

13. They taught the Britons better ways of growing corn. They brought in many new plants and fruit-trees. They made beautiful vessels in pottery and glass. They took care of the Britons and protected them from their foes.

14. There was one part of the island where the Romans never made themselves masters. This was the north, the part which we now call Scotland. Here dwelt a fierce tribe called the Picts. These people loved to attack the southern Britons and plunder them. To keep the Picts back, the Romans built great walls across the land from sea to sea. One ran from the Forth to the Clyde, the other from the Solway Firth to the Tyne.



BRITISH CHARIOTS ATTACKING ROMAN LEGIONS.

THE ENGLISH OVERSEA.

1. And where, at this time, were our own forefathers? To what part of the world must that traveller of seventeen hundred years ago have turned to discover them?

2. To find the Old English he would have had to cross the North Sea to Denmark, and to the flat lands about the mouth of the river Elbe in North Germany. There lived the Jutes, the Angles, and the Saxons, three great tribes from whom the English have sprung.

3. The people of these tribes were very rude and savage. Although they were of the same blood and spoke the same language, they fought fiercely with each other. They did not love towns, and each family lived by itself, forming a little village where the people were all of one name, and all bound to help and defend each other.

4. They were farmers, hunters, and fishermen, and, above all, sailors and fighting men. They went to sea in long, narrow ships, rowed by forty or fifty oars. Many of them were pirates. It was their delight to run a long ship down to the shore, leap aboard, and drive their swift vessel over the waves in search of plunder.

5. They loved the sea, and feared nothing they could meet upon it. If they met a storm, they were seamen so skilful as to ride it out in safety. If they met an enemy, they pulled alongside, dropped their oars, seized axe or sword, and became fighting men whom none could resist.

6. They were known and feared in every country which lay around the North Sea. As a writer of their day says, 'They know the dangers of the deep like men who meet them every day. As a storm throws those whom they wish to attack off their guard, while it hinders their own coming onset from being seen from afar, they gladly risk themselves in the midst of wrecks and sea-beaten rocks, in the hope of making profit out of the very tempest.'

7. About three hundred years after the birth of Christ, the ships of these pirates began to show themselves on the coasts of Britain. For a long time the Saxons, as the Britons called them, only came to rob the towns and villages near the sea. They would run their vessel ashore on some sandy beach, plunder the country about, and sail away again.

8. They were so much feared that the Romans appointed an officer to guard the coast from their attacks. This officer was called the Count of the

Saxon Shore—that is, the shore where the Saxon pirates were most often found.

THE ENGLISH SETTLE IN ENGLAND.

1. As time went on, the home-lands of the Old English grew too small for them. The sons of a house saw that they must look elsewhere to find land of their own.

2. They thought of Britain, the country to which their warships had so often sailed for plunder. They knew that it was easy to seize the land from the Britons. For the Romans, the famous soldiers who ruled and guarded the Britons, had gone away from the island and left the Britons to themselves.

3. The Romans left Britain in A.D. 410, and about 450 a band of Jutes landed in Kent, and settled down to make their homes in the country. This was the first step in the making of England.

4. Now fleet after fleet of long ships sailed for Britain. Band after band of Jutes, Angles, and Saxons, landed on the east and south coasts, and attacked the Britons and took their land from them. It was a long struggle, and it lasted more than a hundred and fifty years.

5. The Britons fought hard, but in vain. Little by little they were driven back, piece by piece they lost their land, until they owned no more than Wales and Cornwall, where their children live to this day.

6. The rest of the country was in the hands of the new-comers. Of these the strongest tribe was the Angles, and because of this the country became known as Angle-Land, England, and the people as English.

7. At first the English lived in their new country just as they had lived in the old home across the North Sea. Each family took a piece of land for itself, and its members built their houses together to form a little village.

8. The houses were very rude, built of posts, the cracks filled in with mud, and with roofs of thatch. There was only one room, and in this the people of the house lived and slept. The fire was in the middle of the floor; there was no chimney, only a hole in the roof for the smoke to escape.

9. Round the village was a strong wall of earth, and outside the wall a deep ditch. There was no way into the village except by a plank across the ditch. When an enemy came, the plank was taken

away, and the people of the village were safe inside their ditch and fence.

10. The chief man of a village was the *earl.* He was a man who had won fame in war, or came of a noble family. He lived in a larger house than anyone else, and was much respected. From the class of earls was chosen a leader in time of war, or a ruler in time of peace.

11. The other freemen of the village were called *churls.* There were also slaves, and these were captives taken in war, or men who could not pay their debts.

12. The Old English were a free people, and were very fond and proud of their freedom. The people of each village settled their own affairs at the 'tun-moot'—that is, a town-meeting, where each man could give his opinion, and could vote for that which he saw to be right.

13. More important matters were settled at larger meetings, such as the 'folk-moot,' where all the folk, the people of a tribe, met to decide such questions as peace or war with another tribe. Here, again, every freeman had a right to attend, and to give his vote upon the affair.

THE ENGLISH BECOME CHRISTIANS.

1. When the Old English came to this country they were heathens. They worshipped numbers of gods, chief among which was Odin or Woden, the war-god, the god of battle and slaughter.

2. Their idea of heaven was of a place where the day was spent in fighting, and the night in feasting and drinking. Only those who died in battle were admitted to this place. To die a peaceful death was thought to be a disgrace, and those who did so went to a place of punishment.

3. In their worship of these gods many cruel and brutal things were done. Upon the altars of Woden, the Old English often put to death captives taken in war, and slaves, and sometimes even their own children.

4. But in 596 there came over to Kent a band of Christian missionaries sent from Rome by Pope Gregory the Great. These missionaries were led by a monk named Augustine, and the latter preached before the King of Kent.

5. The King's wife was already a Christian; she had come over to Kent from the country we now call France, and the King and his people listened to Augustine. In a short time thousands had joined

the new faith, and it spread over the south-east of England.

6. The Christian faith was carried to the north by a daughter of the King of Kent. She married a northern King, and with her went a missionary named Paulinus. The latter spoke so warmly to the King and his chief men, that they agreed to give up their heathen worship and destroy their idols.

7. Among the first to be converted was the chief priest of Woden. He took a sword, went boldly into the temple of the god, and struck down the figure which they had worshipped.

8. There were some who trembled. They feared that Woden would show anger at being thus treated. But nothing happened, and they, too, saw that they had been worshipping only an image of wood, and were now eager to listen to what Paulinus had to tell them of Christ.

9. There is a beautiful story of an old ealdorman who heard Paulinus gladly, and begged the King to listen, too. He said: 'The life of man, O King, seems as the flight of a sparrow through the hall when one is sitting at meat in winter-tide, with the warm fire on the hearth, but the icy rainstorm without.

10. 'The sparrow flies in at one door and tarries



Rischgitz Collection

THE CONVERSION OF SAXONS TO CHRISTIANITY.

After the picture by Herbert.

for a moment in the light and heat of the hearth fire, and then flies forth from the other and vanishes into the darkness whence it came. So tarries for a moment the life of man in our sight, but what is before it, what after it, we know not. If this new teaching tells us aught of these, let us follow it.'

11. The old heathen faith was upheld in the centre of England by a fierce warrior King named Penda. He was never tired of making attacks upon the Christian kingdoms around him. He won battle after battle, till in 655 he was overthrown and slain. After his death it was possible for missionaries to enter his kingdom, and the people were brought over to Christianity.

12. All England now was Christian except Sussex, the kingdom of the South Saxons. This was taken in hand in 681 by a great missionary named Wilfrid, and, within a hundred years of the coming of Augustine, England had become a Christian country.

THE ENGLISH UNDER ONE KING.

1. In our last lesson we spoke of a number of Kings and kingdoms in England. These kingdoms arose from the fact that England was seized by a number of tribes, and each tribe set up its own

King to rule over the piece of country it had taken.

2. Thus, the Jutes formed the kingdom of Kent; a band of Saxons called the South Saxons, because they landed on the southern shore, formed Sussex; another band of Saxons sailed farther west, gained the name of the West Saxons, and formed Wessex; a third band of Saxons, the East Saxons, landed north of the Thames and formed Essex.

3. The great tribe of the Angles attacked the east coast and formed several kingdoms. In the north was Northumbria, the land north of the Humber. In the centre of the country was the kingdom of Mercia; south of the Wash was the kingdom of the East Angles, East Anglia.

4. But among these kingdoms there was generally one which held the mastery over the others. It was not always the same kingdom. Sometimes one King was the chief among his brother Kings, sometimes another. After the English tribes had fought the Welsh and driven them away, they fought just as fiercely with each other, to see which should hold the greatest power in the country.

5. The first King to hold authority was the King of Kent, to whom Augustine preached. After his death the King of Northumbria took the leading

place. Next arose Penda, the savage heathen King, and he overthrew Northumbria, and made his own kingdom of Mercia the most powerful.

6. After Penda was slain, Northumbria took the lead once more. But soon Mercia rose again, and under its great King Offa, who ruled from 757 to 796, was easily chief.

7. Offa was one of the greatest Kings of our early history. He crushed the other kingdoms except Wessex, and made his name a terror to the Welsh who lay along the border of his kingdom. To keep the Welsh in order, and to prevent them from making raids into Mercia, he built a great wall—known as Offa's Dyke—from the Dee to the Wye.

8. But after the death of Offa, Mercia lost her place. Wessex now rose, and under Egbert gained such power that in 825 the other kingdoms submitted to the King of Wessex as overlord and master. Thus it is that Egbert is looked upon as the first King of England.

THE ENGLISH AND THE DANES—I.

1. The English now began to suffer at the hands of pirates, just as the Britons had suffered at their hands hundreds of years before. These pirates were

the Danes, who sailed up the rivers and into the harbours, plundering and burning wherever they came.

2. Though they were called Danes, they did not all come from Denmark: many came from Norway and Sweden. Very often they were called Northmen or Vikings.

3. At first they only came to rob the country. They would land by night or in some secret place, hide their ships, and march upon a town. They would kill the people, plunder the houses, and, after setting fire to the latter, return to their ships and sail away home with their booty. They were heathens, and hated churches and priests above all. They burned the churches and slew the priests.

4. So quick were they in their movements, that by the time an army had gathered to fight them they were gone. There were so many places where they could land that it was not possible to watch every spot. And they came in such numbers that the few men in a village or small town could make no struggle against them.

5. Egbert, of whom we read in the last lesson, had to fight the Danes. He beat them well at Hengestdun in Cornwall in 836. But the Danes came back,

and the Kings who followed Egbert had to fight for their lives.

6. Of these Kings, Egbert's grandson, Alfred the Great, is by far the most famous. He came to the throne of Wessex in 871, at a time when the Danes were trying to seize the country for themselves. Almost all England was in the hands of the Northmen, and if they could capture Wessex they would be masters of the land.

7. But they had now to deal with Alfred, and that great, brave King was too much for them. In 871 he fought in six fierce battles with the Danes. The latter grew so tired of fighting with the men of Wessex that they drew off, and left Alfred in peace for a few years.

8. In 878 the Danes came upon Alfred so suddenly that he had to fly for his life. He hid himself in the little island of Athelney among the swamps of Somerset. It seemed as if the Danes were now sure of winning. But Alfred gathered his men, fell upon the Danes just when they least expected him, and won a great victory at the Battle of Ethandun, 878.

9. The Danes were so well beaten that they begged for mercy. Alfred now made an agreement with them called the Treaty of Wedmore. In making this treaty Alfred showed how wise a man



ALFRED THE GREAT (Statue by Hamo Thornycroft, R.A.).

he was. He knew that he could not drive the Danes out of the country, so he agreed to live at peace with them.

10. He divided England between himself and Guthrum, the Danish leader. The north and east of England were now ruled by Guthrum, who became a Christian, and these parts were known as the Danelagh, or Danelaw, because the laws of the Danes were followed in them.

11. The rest of Alfred's life was spent in work for the good of his people. He thought more of their happiness and welfare than of anything else. He made good laws for them, and saw that the laws were obeyed.

12. He built churches and schools and was eager to have his people taught to read. He gave all his time and strength to serve his subjects. He died in 901, leaving behind him a great and famous name, which is loved to this day.

THE ENGLISH AND THE DANES—II.

1. After the death of Alfred, the English Kings were fighting with the Danes for more than a hundred years. Alfred's son Edward, and his grandson Athelstan, were famous fighting Kings,

and won back the Danelaw, so that the King of Wessex was once more King of England.

2. The greatest victory over the Danes was won by Athelstan in 937. A great host of enemies joined against him. The Danes, the Scotch, the Welsh, all came upon him at once. Athelstan met them, and there was a terrible battle. The fight was hard and long, but the men of Wessex won. No less than five Danish Kings and seven great Earls were left dead upon the field.

3. But about forty years later there came to the throne a very weak and foolish King. He was called 'Ethelred the Unready,' because he was unready to listen to the wise advice of those who knew better than himself. It was no time for such a King. England needed an able ruler, for fresh bands of the Danes were making attacks upon the country.

4. They sailed up the Humber, up the Wash, up the Thames. They showed themselves as savage and cruel as the Danes that attacked Alfred. They burned farms, churches, villages, towns; they slew without mercy all they met; they plundered everywhere.

5. The weak King and his friends could think of no better plan to get rid of the Danes than that of giving them money to go away. It is easy to see

what a foolish plan was this. No sooner had one band taken its money and gone, than a fresh band came, and this must be bought off as well. Other bands heard of it, and they came, and so on.

6. Ethelred raised the money by putting a tax on the people. This tax was called *Danegeld*—that is, Dane-gold, Dane-money.

7. Then Ethelred thought of another plan. He gave orders that all the Danes who had settled in his kingdom should be killed. On St. Brice's Day in 1002 this was done. The English rose upon the Danes who lived in their midst, and put them to death—men, women, and children.

8. This dreadful piece of work turned out worse than the Dane-money. The Danes, full of grief and rage for their murdered friends, attacked England more savagely than ever.

9. Sweyn, King of Denmark, was furious. His sister and her husband were among the slain. He vowed that he would drive Ethelred from the throne and take England for himself.

10. He came to England the next year, and then followed ten years of great misery for the country. The Danes marched up and down the land burning and slaying, while Ethelred and his chief men did little or nothing to prevent them. At last Ethelred

fled over the sea to Normandy, and left Sweyn master of England in 1013.

THE ENGLISH UNDER THE DANISH KINGS.

1. Soon after Ethelred fled from England, Sweyn, the Danish King, died. Canute, the son of Sweyn, now became the leader of the Danes.

2. Ethelred came back in 1014, and died two years later. His son, Edmund Ironside, became King. Edmund had now to fight with Canute, and this time the Danes had no easy task.

3. Edmund Ironside—he won this name because he was a brave warrior who would never give in—fought five great battles with the Danes. Three he won, and one was not settled. But in the fifth battle, at Ashdown in Essex, the English were defeated, and almost all the English nobles were slain.

4. Though Canute had won so great a victory, he had had enough fighting. He agreed to divide the kingdom with Edmund. Only a few months later Edmund died, and now Canute became King of the whole country.

5. Canute made a wise and good King. He was fair and just to all men. He treated the English

quite as well as he treated the Danes. He made peace in the land, and saw that the laws were obeyed. After the many years of fighting and bloodshed and robbery, the people were very glad to have such a King.

6. He was a great friend to religion. He gave much land and rich gifts to the churches. An old story tells us that he was once rowing by boat along the river Ely, when he heard the monks singing sweetly. And he composed this verse :

7. Merrily sang the monks in Ely,
As Canute the King rowed by ;
Row, men, to the land more near,
That we the good monks' song may hear.

8. Many stories are told of Canute. All of them show that he had good sense, and was not puffed up by his high place. His people loved him, and when he died in 1035 they mourned for him, for he had ruled them wisely and well.

9. He was followed by two sons, who reigned in turn, Harold and Hardicanute. But they were quite unlike their father. They proved rude, savage men, unfit to be Kings. When Hardicanute died in 1042, the crown passed away from the Danes. Edward,

the son of Ethelred, was chosen as King, and once more a man of Alfred's line sat upon the throne.

THE ENGLISH AND THE NORMANS—I.

1. The new King was a very quiet man, of so pious a life that he gained the title of Edward the Confessor. He was very fond of building churches and looking after matters of religion. He was so busy in affairs of this nature, that he left the government of England very much to the chief men of the country, the Earls, each of whom ruled a division of the kingdom.

2. Edward was forty-one years of age when he came to the throne. He had spent his youth at the Court of the Duke of Normandy, and we shall see that this fact made a great difference to our history. For when Edward came to be King of England, many of his Norman friends came with him. He gave to these Normans high places in the government, and the Norman language was spoken in his Court.

3. The English did not like this at all. They thought that the King ought to have Englishmen about him, and not Norman strangers. Very soon a quarrel arose between the English and Normans.

In the end the Normans were driven out of the country.

4. Now the chief man among the English was Harold, Earl of Wessex. Harold was a strong, brave man. After the Norman friends of the King had fled out of England, Harold became the real ruler of the country. Edward left everything to him. And Harold managed affairs so well that the land was happy and peaceful.

5. Edward the Confessor died in 1066. He had no children. Who was to wear the crown after him? There was a meeting of the Witan, the Wise Men of the kingdom, a body which we may call the Saxon Parliament, and they chose Harold to be King.

6. They had a perfect right to do this, for among the Old English the strongest and best man was always elected to be King. As a rule he was of royal blood, but if no fitting man could be found of royal blood, then a man of another family might be chosen, as in the case of Harold.

7. But the election of Harold filled William, Duke of Normandy, with rage and fury. Who was William, and why should he be so angry because Harold was chosen King of England?

8. Duke William was the cousin of Edward the Confessor. He had visited England to see Edward,

and he said that Edward had promised the crown of England to him. If this promise was given it was worth nothing, for it lay with the Witan to decide who should be King, and the Wise Men chose Harold.

9. William declared that he would come to England with a great army, and drive Harold from the throne. He began at once to make ready, to gather soldiers, to build ships, to prepare all he would need to conquer England.

THE ENGLISH AND THE NORMANS—II.

1. William of Normandy was indeed an enemy to be feared. He had been a great soldier all his life. From his boyhood he had had to fight hard to hold his own. So that he grew up to be the most famous warrior in Europe, at a time when all men were warriors.

2. He gathered a great army, and sailed for England at the end of September, 1066. Harold, on his side, had called his fighting men about him, and was ready to defend the English shore.

3. But Harold, while waiting for William, heard bad news. A great army had landed in the north of England. Tostig, a brother of Harold, had

been driven out of England a short time before, because he ill-treated the people in the earldom over which he ruled. Now he had come back to win his earldom, and with him Harold Hardrada, King of Norway, at the head of a great army.

4. Away marched Harold of England at once for the north, as fast as his men could go. He met the invaders at Stamford Bridge in Yorkshire, and there overthrew them in a fierce battle. Tostig and Hardrada were both killed in the fight.

5. In honour of this victory Harold held a great feast at York. In the midst of the feast a messenger rushed in with the tidings that William the Norman had landed in Sussex.

6. Harold had now to march back with all speed. As he went he sent messages calling fresh troops to his aid. Nor did he stay his march till he reached the hill of Senlac, a few miles from Hastings. Here he drew up his men along the ridge, and waited for William to attack him.

7. The English were mostly foot-soldiers, armed with great battle-axes. Harold bade them stand shoulder to shoulder, and on no account break their lines. Great numbers of the Normans were knights, covered with armour and riding strong horses. William had also many archers and spearmen.



THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS.

8. The Norman archers began the battle. But the English, safe behind a strong fence and covered by their large shields, cared nothing for the Norman arrows. Next the Norman knights tried to break a way through the English line. Again and again they were beaten back. Nothing could stand before the terrible English battle-axes.

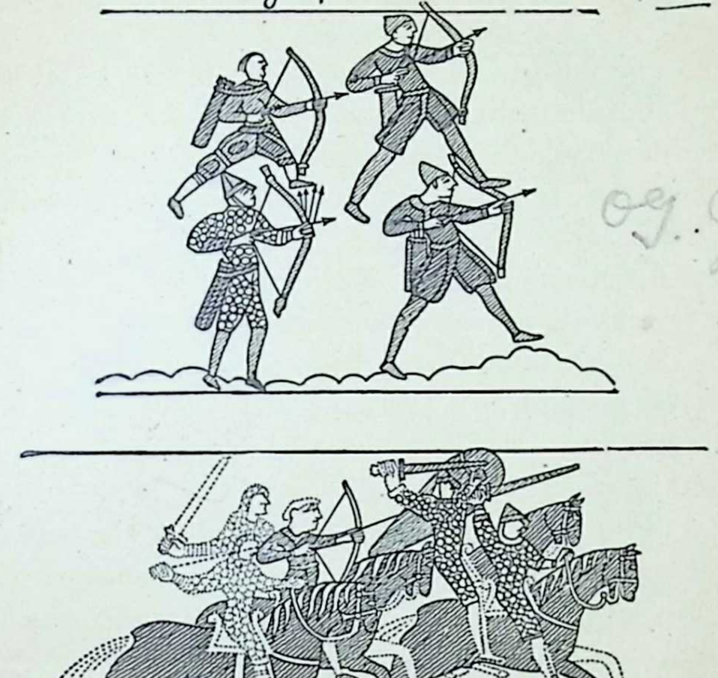
9. William himself was beaten from his horse, and a cry arose that he was killed. He tore his helmet from his head, and shouted, 'I live! I live! and by God's help I will yet win the day.'

10. Finding the English line could not be broken by force, he tried a trick. He ordered some of his troops to pretend to run away. Seeing this, a number of the English forgot Harold's order to stand firm, and rushed after them in hot pursuit.

11. But the Normans faced about and met the scattered English in good order. The English were killed to a man, and there was now a gap in the English line, at which the Normans could break in.

12. But Harold and his war-band fought on around the English banner. Nor was the fight ended till an arrow pierced the eye of the English King and he fell.

13. With the fall of Harold the English lost heart. They were driven back and the standard



Norman Archers. Norman Horsemen. Harold pierced in the Eye with an Arrow.

THE NORMAN INVASION. (*From the Bayeux Tapestry.*)

was taken. When night came they fled from Senlac, leaving the last English King dead upon the field, and the Norman Duke victor of the hard-fought day.

THE ENGLISH RISE AGAINST WILLIAM.

1. After the Battle of Hastings, William was crowned King at Westminster on Christmas Day. But he was not yet master of the country. There were still years of hard fighting for him before he could call himself lord of the land.

2. Even though Harold and many of the great nobles were slain, it might still have been possible to drive the Normans out of the country, if the English had risen together as one man upon the new-comers. But this was just what they did not do. Some of the leaders were jealous of each other, and the men of the north would not join with the men of the south.

3. Thus there was a rising here and a rising there, one at one time, and another at another time. This made it easy for the Normans to deal with each district in turn, and stamp out each outbreak as it arose.

4. Soon after he was crowned, William went back

to Normandy to look after affairs there. He left Odo, his brother, to guard the kingdom. But Odo behaved with such cruelty that the men of Kent rose against him. At the same time another rebellion broke out in the west.

5. William came back and set to work to crush those who would not own him as King. He beat the men of Kent, and then marched to the west. He took Exeter, the centre of the rising, after a siege of three weeks, and built a strong castle there to keep the west in order.

6. Then he marched to the north, for there had been a rising in that part of the country, and some Normans slain at Durham. He had little trouble on this occasion, for the men of the north submitted to him at once.

7. But a year later, in 1069, the north broke out once more. This time they were aided by an army of Danes. William was now roused to fierce anger. He made up his mind to teach the rebels a terrible lesson: they should see he was not to be trifled with.

8. He marched north, gave the Danes a sum of money to desert the English, and then set to work to lay waste the country. From the Humber to the Tees he made the land a desert. He slew the

people—men, women and children. He burned the farms, killed the cattle, and destroyed every scrap of food. For a hundred years after, the land lay naked and silent, its fields unploughed, its homesteads mere heaps of black ruins.

9. After this savage treatment of the north, there was only one more rising, but it gave William much trouble. It was under the famous 'Hereward the Wake,' in 1071, and the English made their stand in the Isle of Ely, in the Fens.

10. The Isle of Ely was a patch of dry ground rising in the midst of swamps and rivers. Here Hereward formed a camp of refuge, and many English joined him.

11. William marched against him, but for a year Hereward held out against the Normans. It was not easy to get into the isle, for there was no firm ground over which to march an army. At last some monks, wishing to please William, showed him a secret path into the isle, and the camp of refuge was seized.

12. It is said that Hereward submitted, and was taken into favour by William. This was the last rising of the English. William was master at last of the whole kingdom.

THE ENGLISH LOSE THEIR FREEDOM.

1. The coming of the Normans made a very great difference to the English people. To large numbers of them it made all the difference between freedom and slavery.

2. Before the Conquest, the Saxon churl was a freeman, tilling his own patch of land, and sending his cattle to feed on the common land which was free to all. But after the Conquest, he became a serf, a slave, owning nothing which he could really call his own.

3. This great change was brought about by the introduction of the *Feudal System* into England. Under this system the King was looked upon as owning all the land in the kingdom. Some of the land he kept in his own hands, and some of it he gave to his Norman followers.

4. But every man who held land from the King had to do *homage* to him. In doing *homage* the holder swore to be the King's man, and to serve the King in war with a number of soldiers. These holders were called *tenants-in-chief*, and the land they held was known as a *fee* or *feud*.

5. If a *tenant-in-chief* held a very large piece of land, he could let parts of it out to tenants of his

own, who were called *under-tenants.* These men swore homage to him as he had sworn homage to the King.

6. This system was of much service in time of war, when the King needed an army quickly. He called upon his *tenants-in-chief.* They in turn called upon their tenants, and as every man was bound to keep horse and weapons ready, a large body of soldiers was soon brought together.

7. Now, in giving his followers large estates, William cared nothing for the Saxon freemen whose farms lay in that part of the country. They were handed over to the Norman lord with the estate, and became serfs. They had now to pay a rent for the pieces of land they had formerly owned as freemen. As a rule this rent was paid in labour. The serf had to work on the lord's land for so many days of the year in return for his own little farm.

8. The Norman lord held the serfs very much at his mercy. It is true that, as long as they performed the work due, he could not drive them from their holdings, but they were bound in many ways.

9. Here are some things which a serf could not do without the permission of his lord: He could not send his child to school. He could not let his son or daughter marry. He could not sell an ox, a calf, a

horse or colt from his own stable. He could not cut down an oak or an ash on his own land. He could not leave his holding. He could not permit a grown-up son or daughter to leave home to find work elsewhere.

10. For every one of these things he had to gain permission from his lord. This permission was never given except upon payment of a fine, and thus the serf's little savings were always falling into his lord's pocket.

11. William himself was very sharp in looking after all payments due to him. In 1085 he sent officers into all parts of the country to find out how much land each man held, what it was worth, and what amount of tax it ought to pay.

12. All these answers, together with the number of cattle and sheep upon each farm, were set down in a book called Domesday Book (the book of judgment). This book is still to be seen in the British Museum.

THE ENGLISH HELP THE NORMAN KINGS.

1. After William's death in 1087, two of his sons reigned in turn over England. William the Red, William Rufus, was an able man, but a cruel and

wicked King. He was shot in the New Forest in 1100. The second son, Henry I., was a much better and kinder man. He tried to rule justly and make all obey the law. He greatly pleased the English by marrying a Saxon Princess.

2. But during these two reigns the English people gained the favour of both William and Henry by helping them against the Norman barons.

3. These barons were the followers of William the Conqueror. When they came to England and received great estates for helping to win the country, they tried to seize more and more power. Each baron wished to be a little king over the piece of land which had been granted to him. William I. fought against this idea, and his sons fought against it, too.

4. These barons wished to set themselves above the laws of the country. The Norman Kings were resolved that the laws should be above the barons. More than once King and barons came to open war. Twice the barons gathered their forces and tried to drive William Rufus from the throne. He would have been in great trouble if the English had not stood by him, and helped him to crush the rebels.

5. It may be asked why the English should do so much for a bad King. But the English knew very

well that each baron would be just as bad as Rufus himself, if he could enjoy the chance. So that in helping the King to master the barons, the English were taking care there was only one tyrant in the country instead of a hundred.

6. When Henry I. came to the throne in 1100, the English helped him gladly, for they loved him. Henry made up his mind to break the power of the barons. With the help of his English subjects, he put them down one after another.

7. Henry was also attacked by his brother Robert. Robert was Duke of Normandy, and he wished to become King of England as well. He brought an army to England, and the barons joined him at once. They did this because Robert was an easy-going man, and with him on the throne, the Norman lords thought they could do as they pleased.

8. But Henry and the English beat off Robert's attack. Henry ruled for thirty-five years, and under him the land had peace. So great was his love of right that his people called him 'The Lion of Justice,' and men said of him, 'He was a good man, and great was the awe of him; no man durst ill-treat another in his time.'

THE ENGLISH MISERY UNDER STEPHEN.

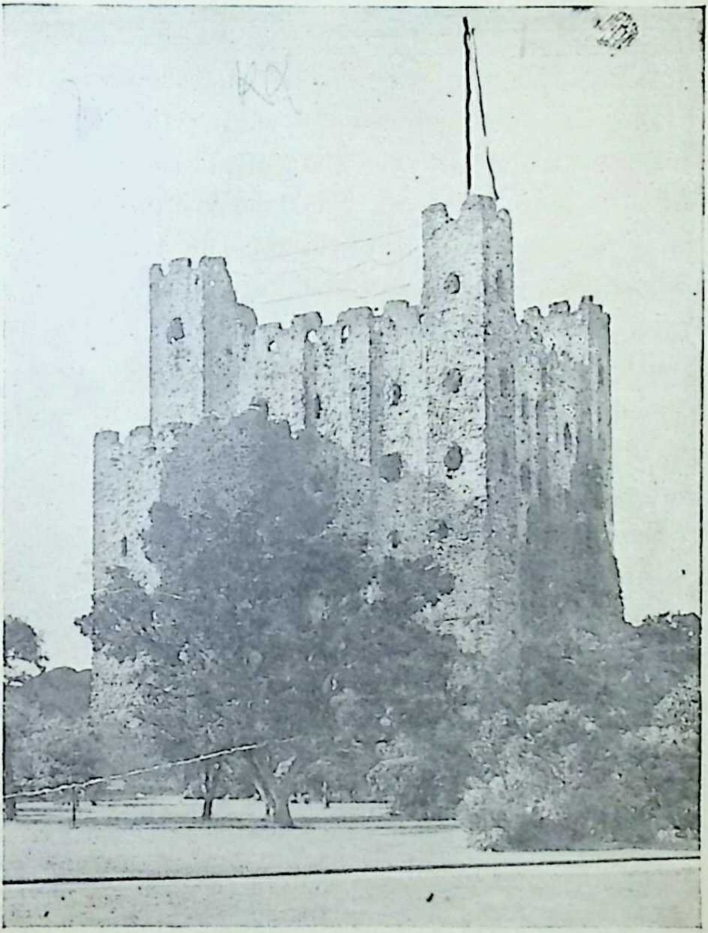
1. When Henry I. died, he left a daughter named Matilda. He wished this daughter to become Queen, and while he was alive he made his barons promise to support her. But after his death the fierce barons refused to be ruled over by a woman, and chose Stephen, a grandson of the Conqueror, as King.

2. Stephen was a well-meaning man, but not strong enough to hold down the barons as the Kings before him had done. This was soon seen in the matter of building castles.

3. Every Norman baron wished to build a strong castle of his own. But William and his sons were very careful about giving permission to do this. The reason is plain. A baron who lived in a castle with walls ten feet thick and thirty feet high could defy the King more easily than a baron without a castle.

4. Now Stephen, to please the barons, allowed them to build castles as they wished. As a result, more than one hundred new stone castles sprang up in different parts of England.

5. Before long war broke out. Matilda and her friends tried to drive Stephen from the throne. Some of the barons fought for Stephen, some for



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ROCHESTER CASTLE.

Matilda. The country was split up into two parties, and there was much fighting.

6. In the course of this war the English people, the farmers, the traders, the workers who only wished to mind their own business, suffered in a most terrible fashion. There was no one to see that right was done in the land, and many of the barons robbed and ill-treated the people without mercy.

7. A book written at the time tells us that these powerful men took the country-people, and made them toil hard, without pay, at building the new castles. When the castles were built they became dens of robbers.

8. The book goes on: 'And when the castles were made, they filled them with evil men. Then they took all those that they thought had any goods, both by night and by day, men and women alike, and put them in prison to get their gold and silver, and tormented them with pains unspeakable.

9. 'They hanged some up by the feet, and smoked them with a foul smoke. Some were hung up by the thumbs, others by the head, and burning things were hung on to their feet. They put knotted strings about their heads, and twisted the cords till they went into the brain. They flung men into prisons in which were adders, snakes,

and toads, and there let them perish with hunger.'

10. Upon the villages around their castles these robber barons laid heavy taxes. When the poor people had no more money to meet these unjust demands, the village was burnt to the ground and the cattle seized.

11. To make matters worse, foreign troops were brought into the country to fight in the war, and these men plundered all before them. Such was the terror of the unhappy people, that if two or three men were seen riding to a township, all fled from them, fearing them to be robbers.

12. It was possible to ride a day's journey without seeing a single tilled field. A famine followed. 'Corn and cheese and butter were dear, for there was none in the land.' Great numbers of people died of hunger. And this dreadful misery lasted for nineteen years.

13. At last the struggle was ended. It was agreed that Stephen should remain King as long as he lived, but that after his death, Henry, the son of Matilda, should come to the throne.

THE ENGLISH GAIN FROM THE CONQUEST.

1. The Norman Conquest was, in the end, a good thing for the English nation. It may seem hard at first to believe that, after reading of the cruel times through which the English passed. But it is quite true.

2. In the first place, it made the English one nation. Before the Conquest there had often been much jealousy between one part of the country and another. This feeling came down from the old times, when one English tribe fought with another.

3. William I. crushed out all such feeling. Under his stern rule, when all Englishmen suffered alike, they came to feel alike. This was a long step towards forming in England that national spirit which has made our country so great.

4. The Normans also taught the English many things. The truth was that the English, living in an island by themselves, had fallen behind the rest of Europe. While the other nations had learned to build fine houses, the English still lived in clumsy wooden dwellings; while other people had improved in manners, the English were still rude and unpolished.

5. The Normans brought to England the knowledge of building cathedrals, castles, and other fine buildings. In their eating the Normans were dainty, and their cooks knew how to dress food in newer and better ways than the English cooks. At a Saxon feast there was always plenty to eat and drink, but it was rough and coarse.

6. The Normans also knew much more about books and learning, about law, about art, and such matters. When they came to England they brought better teachers and scholars into the land. This was all to the advantage of the country. It brought England abreast of other nations.

7. The Normans spoke a kind of French, and for a long time there were two languages in the land. The upper classes spoke Norman-French; the lower used the English tongue. In the end English won the day, and Norman-French died out.

8. But the English spoken after the Norman-French had gone was not the English used before the Normans came. Many French words and forms had found their way into it, making it a much finer and smoother tongue.

9. The Normans soon mixed with the English, and the two races became one nation. It was easy for them to mix, for English and Norman were

really brothers in blood. The Norman was a Northman, just as the Saxons and Danes were.

10. In the days of King Alfred, one band of Northmen had seized upon the north of France and formed the province of Normandy, just as other Northmen had seized upon part of England and formed the Danelagh. But the Northmen of Normandy had learned more, and become more polished than their cousins in England.

11. When the two races were joined, a very mighty nation was the result. The spirit and charm of the Norman together with the solid strength of the Saxon have formed the English-speaking people of to-day, the people who rule so much of the earth, and whose language is spreading so widely.

THE ENGLISH UNDER HENRY II.

1. When Henry II. came to the throne after Stephen, there was soon a great change in the affairs of the country. Henry was a great man, and became a great King. He loved order, and was resolved that all men, high and low, should obey the law.

2. To the joy of the people, he made an end at

once of the robber barons. He ordered them to pull down their castles. If one refused, Henry marched upon him, beat down his castle, and drove him out of the country.

3. Owing to the confusion of Stephen's reign, there was much to do before the land was in order. Henry was the man to do it. A harder worker was never known. He travelled up and down England, riding swiftly from one town to another. Everywhere he went he looked into matters for himself.

4. When he came to a place, he asked who were the men in charge, how they kept order, and if they dealt justly with the people. All who had complaints could lay them before the King; and if he found a great man acting unjustly, that man felt the weight of Henry's hand, and learned that it was very heavy.

5. So active was this King in moving from place to place that his servants hardly knew how to keep up with him. A large train of people followed him always. There were the judges who helped him to decide cases, the clerks who wrote his letters and kept his accounts, a great number of servants and attendants, and a strong guard of soldiers to deal with unruly barons.

English. T. V. Vasudevan.

6. There are letters still to be read which were written by some of these people, and the letters are full of complaints of the hardships they underwent in following the King. Sometimes he would stop for the night in a little village, where there was hardly any shelter, and very little food.

7. The King would lodge in a hut, but most of his train had to sleep under the open sky. For food they had nothing better than black bread and sour beer, and not much of those. Then in the morning away would gallop the King, and they must toil after him.

8. Besides England, Henry ruled over half of France also. To manage these vast possessions he was obliged to use men to work for him, and he was very clever at choosing good servants. The most famous servant Henry ever had was Thomas Becket.

9. At first Becket helped Henry in his work of governing the kingdom and putting it in order. In this he served Henry so well that the King thought Becket would be the very man to carry out another task.

10. At that day the Church was very powerful. It had its own Courts where all wrong-doers belonging to the Church were tried. But there were also King's Courts where other people were tried.

11. Now, Henry thought that all men who did wrong should be tried in the King's Court by the King's judges. Then all men would be under the same law, for in the Church Courts an evil-doer got off more easily than in the other Courts.

12. So Henry made Becket Archbishop of Canterbury, and placed him at the head of the English Church. He thought Becket would be sure to help him to carry out this change. But Becket did not do so. He fought with all his might to maintain the power of the Church, and before long he and Henry were bitter enemies.

13. In his disappointment and anger, Henry, who had a furious temper, one day cried out: 'What sluggards and cowards do I nourish at my Court, where there is not one who will rid me of this base priest.'

14. Four of his knights took him at his word, went to Canterbury, and slew Becket in the cathedral. Henry was full of sorrow, for he had not meant his hasty words, and he showed his grief in many ways. This happened in 1170.

15. During the next year, 1171, Henry paid a visit to Ireland. Some of his knights had conquered part of Ireland, but hundreds of years passed away

before the English could be said to rule in that country.

16. Henry's last days were full of trouble and sorrow. His sons rose against him, and tried to take his land from him. He had many enemies, and they were never tired of attacking him. At last, worn out with labour and anxiety, he died in 1189. He was a very great King, and did much to bring England under better laws and better law-courts.

THE ENGLISH WIN THE GREAT CHARTER.

1. After the death of Henry II., his two sons, Richard and John, came to the throne in turn. Richard was a famous warrior, and was so brave that he won the name of 'The Lion Heart.' But though he was King for ten years, he has little to do with our story of the English people. He only spent a few months in England. During the rest of his reign he was fighting in France, or at the Crusades.

2. The Crusades, or Wars of the Cross, were fought with the Turks. The Turks had seized Jerusalem, and they ill-treated the Christian pilgrims who went to visit the Holy Land and the Holy City. So great armies of Christian soldiers went to Palestine to drive away the Turks, and take

Jerusalem out of their hands. Among the Crusaders of his day, Richard was the greatest and most famous.

3. But if we have little to say of Richard, we have much to say of John. For in his reign the English people won a great victory for freedom. They won the Great Charter, by which he and all Kings after him were bound to rule justly and honestly.

4. John was the worst King that ever sat upon the throne of England. He was false and mean and cruel. He treated everyone in his power like a tyrant. But at the same time he was a great coward. He trembled before those whom he feared.

5. He came to the throne in 1199, and began at once to ill-treat those whom he disliked. He laid heavy taxes upon the people, he plundered the rich, and, if any man dared to refuse to give up his wealth, he was flung into prison and put to torture.

6. After fifteen years of such rule as this, the people made up their minds to bear it no longer. All rose against him. Great barons and poor farmers were of one mind—that they would endure no more at the hands of this wicked King.

7. In 1214 a strong league was formed of men who were resolved to force John to rule properly. They were led by a great Englishman—Stephen

Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury. He proposed that they should draw up a paper containing the laws and customs which John ought to observe as King. This was done, and the paper was called *Magna Carta*, the Great Charter, the Great Writing.

8. The paper was offered to John, and he was asked to sign it in token that he would agree to its contents. He read it over, and refused to sign. 'Why do they not ask for my kingdom at once?' he cried in his anger.

9. But all his anger was of no use. His people were roused, and when he refused to sign the Great Charter they took up arms, determined to fight for their freedom. The coward King gave way at once, and signed the Charter at Runnymede, near Windsor, on June 15, 1215.

10. This Great Charter contained many clauses, but two of them are far in importance beyond the others. One says that no freeman shall be punished unless he has broken the law, and the other says: 'To no man will we sell, to no man will we deny or delay, right or justice.'

11. It is easy to see there can be no freedom in a country unless these two clauses are obeyed. To punish an innocent man, to refuse to do right be-

tween man and man—these things can only happen in a country where the people are slaves.

12. After *Magna Carta* was signed, every Englishman could appeal to it, and demand to be treated as it provided. It has been the great safeguard of our liberty for seven hundred years.

13. A few months after signing *Magna Carta* John began to behave as badly as ever. He marched about the country with an army of foreign soldiers, burning, killing, robbing his people. But, to the joy of all, he died the next year, in 1216.

THE ENGLISH HOLD THEIR FIRST PARLIAMENT.

1. At the time John died his son Henry was only a little boy. The child was crowned King as Henry III. When Henry grew up, he proved a very weak and foolish King. He spent large sums of money in waste, and gave much away to people who ought not to have received a penny.

2. He married a French wife, and a great number of her friends and relations came to England with her. To these people Henry gave broad lands, and large sums of money which the English people had paid as taxes.

3. It was not likely that the English would be willing to pay taxes and see the money go into the pockets of foreigners, and soon there was much grumbling. More than that, the foreigners who took the English money laughed and jeered at the English people, and made open sport of them.

4. Henry grew worse as he grew older. He became still more wasteful and careless, and laid heavier and heavier taxes on the people to obtain the money for his pleasures and his friends.

5. At last the English barons, led by a brave and good man named Simon de Montfort, made Henry promise to obey the Great Charter which his father had signed. This proved of no use. Henry was quite ready to promise. But his word was not to be trusted. He would make the most solemn promise, and break it at once.

6. Simon de Montfort proposed that a Council should be formed to help the King in governing. Above all, this Council should say what taxes were needed, how much ought to be paid, and what part of the tax should be borne by each class in the nation.

7. It is true there had been a Council before De Montfort's day. But it had been formed only of the great nobles and the clergy. Simon de Montfort

wished all classes to have a voice in the government.

8. So in 1265 he and his friends called together the first real Parliament in our history. Members came to it from the counties and the large towns. Through these members the voice of the people could be heard for the first time. They could say what the mass of the nation thought about taxes, laws, and the management of the country.

9. We must not think this first Parliament was at all like our Parliament of to-day. It was far weaker, and at first the men from the shires and towns hardly dared to speak in presence of the great nobles. But before long they found their voices, when a question of a tax came up, and were not slow to give the opinion of the people of their town or district.

10. The power of Parliament grew very slowly, but it grew steadily. The members soon found that in granting taxes they had a strong hold over the King. When the King was short of money, he would call Parliament together to vote taxes.

11. But the members would refuse to do so unless the King would grant something on his side. Sometimes they wished him to do away with an unjust practice; sometimes they demanded fresh power for

themselves. Thus the strength of Parliament became greater and greater.

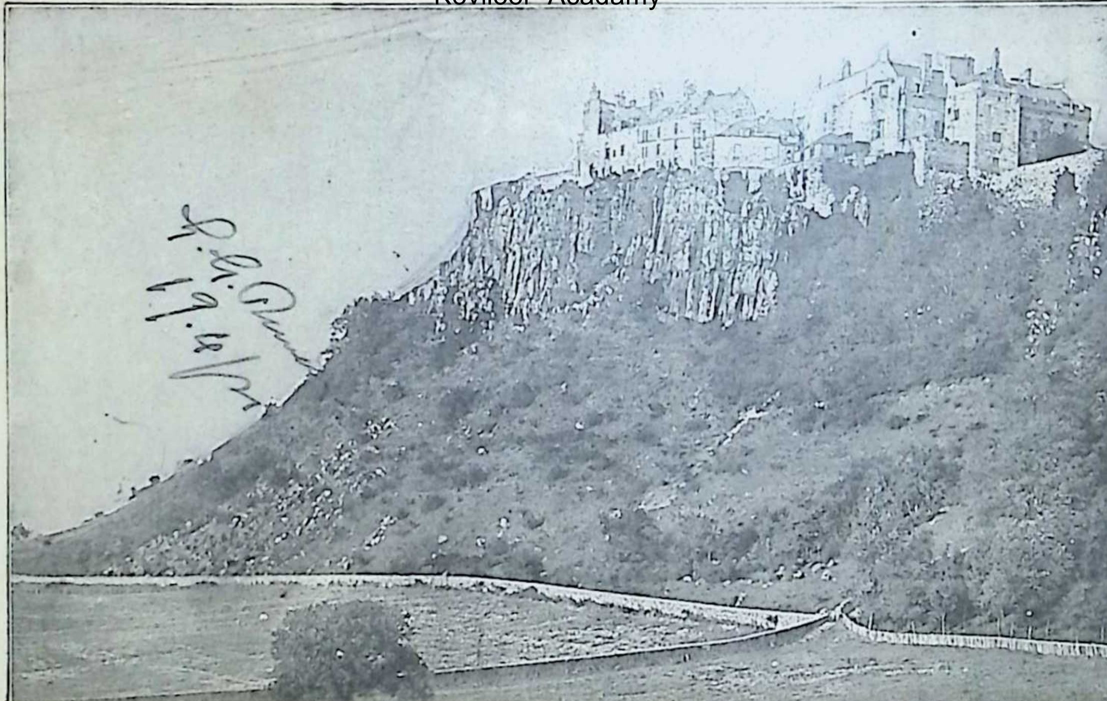
THE ENGLISH UNDER EDWARD I.

1. The next King, Edward I., son of Henry III., was one of the greatest of English Kings. He was wise and good, a famous soldier and an able ruler.

2. During his reign there was much fighting with the Scots in the north and the Welsh in the west. Edward wished to rule over the whole island, over the Scots and the Welsh as well as the English. At that time Scotland and Wales were not united with England as they are now, but were separate countries, each ruled by its own King or Prince.

3. Edward began with the Welsh. They were the nearest, and they had given the most trouble. They were always ready to march into England, plunder towns and villages, and then escape into their wild hills when an army was brought against them.

4. Edward marched into Wales with a strong army, and there was much fighting. In the end the Welsh Prince, Llewelyn, was killed, and Edward became the master of Wales. This was in 1283, and ever since that year Wales has been looked upon



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STIRLING CASTLE FROM KING'S PARK.

as part of the kingdom, and the Welsh as fellow-countrymen of the English.

5. Edward had much harder work with the Scots. He led army after army to Scotland, and he beat the Scots in battle after battle. He dealt them such blows that he was called 'The Hammer of the Scots.'

6. But the Scots would not give in. As soon as Edward had gone back to England, they rose against the men he left in charge of the country, and all the King's work was upset. This happened time after time, and, indeed, Edward died when marching to Scotland to put down a fresh rising. So it cannot be said that he made himself master of Scotland.

7. The English loved Edward, for he ruled them well. He made good laws, and did his utmost to see that every man had justice done to him. In his time many of the great land-owners held courts of their own. In these courts they tried all in their neighbourhood who were said to have done wrong.

8. Edward was not satisfied that everybody had fair play in these courts. He thought it was better that a man should be tried by the King's judge than by his landlord, who might have a grudge against him.

9. He sent officers to find out if each land-owner had received proper permission to hold such a court. In every case where no good right could be shown, the court was taken away, and the King's judge was sent to try all prisoners.

10. Under Edward the English Parliament took a long step forward. In 1295 he called the Model Parliament. Edward had a saying, 'That which touches all should be agreed to by all.' All men had to pay taxes, and he wished every class to have its say in the matter. So he followed up the work of Simon de Montfort by calling together the barons, the clergy, two men from each shire, and two citizens from each large town.

11. There was now someone in Parliament to speak for every rank, to say how much of the tax each class could afford to pay, and to say what people thought about new laws.

THE ENGLISH BOWMEN AND THEIR GREAT VICTORIES

1. The great King Edward I. was followed by a weak and foolish son, Edward II. In the reign of the latter was fought the famous Battle of Bannockburn (1314). The English had beaten the Scots roundly under Edward I. Now they suffered a

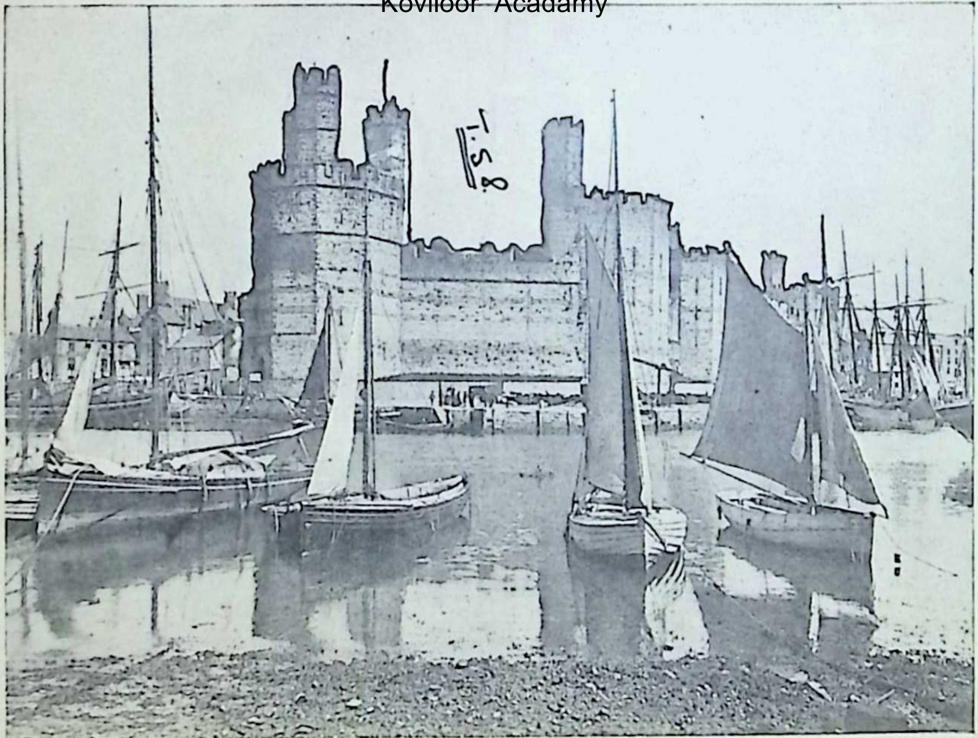
great defeat, and Robert Bruce and the Scots won a great victory.

2. The next King, Edward III., proved another great fighting King, and under him the English won many battles. In this reign began a great war with France, which lasted more than a hundred years, and so came to be called the Hundred Years' War.

3. Edward wished to make himself King of France. He went there with a strong army, and fought a famous battle at Crecy in 1346. The French had a much larger army than Edward. It was also a very splendid army. There were great numbers of knights, clad in shining steel armour and riding fine horses.

4. On his side, Edward depended mostly on his archers, men on foot, shooting long arrows with strong bows. The French, too, had a large body of archers, and these were sent forward to begin the battle. But they could not shoot like the English, and when they felt the English arrows they ran away.

5. Next, the French horsemen galloped to the attack, but the English bowmen shot so hard and true that their arrows went through steel armour, and so fast that 'it seemed as if it snowed.'



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Carnarvon Castle. The birth of Edward II., the first Prince of Wales, took place here.

6. For some time the battle was very furious. But the English, led by Edward's son, the famous Black Prince, fought so well that the French were overthrown. They fled in confusion, leaving two Kings, eleven Princes, and thousands of great nobles and knights, dead upon the field.

7. Ten years later another great battle was fought at Poitiers in France, in 1356. This time the Black Prince was at the head of the English, and there seemed no hope for him and his soldiers.

8. He had about eight thousand men, and these were tired, for they had made a long, weary march. They were half starved also, for there was great lack of food. Of the French there were forty or fifty thousand, well armed, well fed, and so sure of victory that they were settling before the battle what to do with the English prisoners.

9. The fight began, and once more, as at Crecy, the English bowmen won a mighty victory. The great French army was broken to pieces; eleven thousand were slain, and two thousand taken prisoners. Among the prisoners was the King of France himself.

10. These two great battles are famous in our history, because in them the common English foot-soldier proved himself a better man than the great French noble in rich armour.



ENGLISH LONGBOW ARCHERS.

11. Up to this time battles had been won by knights. The knights were clothed from head to foot in steel armour ; they rode on powerful horses, and carried long lances and heavy swords. Their ranks were filled by the chief men of the country and their followers.

12. Against these splendid warriors there stepped out the English bowman. He looked at first no match at all for them. He had no armour save a cap of steel and a jacket of leather. At his belt hung a long knife, and at his side a sword. It seemed as if the steel-clad knight upon a great horse must ride down such a foot-soldier at once.

13. But in his hand the English archer held a great bow of yew, six feet long, and at his side was slung a quiver filled with arrows a yard in length. His aim was so true that he could strike his enemy where he pleased, and his strength and skill were so great that he could drive his arrow through a steel helmet or brass plate.

14. Such was the famous English bowman. At home perhaps he was a serf, a bondsman, or at best a small farmer. Abroad he was the equal of the best knights in France, and often the better man.

15. There can be no doubt that the strong arms and stout heart of the English archer helped to raise

the class to which he belonged. Under the Feudal System the knight in full armour was held in very great respect, the serf in very little. But when the serf met the knight and overthrew him, it was not possible any longer to hold the serf as a man of little account.

THE ENGLISH AND THE BLACK DEATH.

1. About the time that these battles were fought, there happened an event which made a very great difference to the English people. A terrible sickness called the plague broke out in the country. The plague came from the East, crossed Europe, and reached England in 1348.

2. It spread from house to house, from village to village. It killed people very quickly. Strong men were taken with it, and died in a few hours. Animals died of it as well. There were places where not a single living creature was left, both man and beast being dead of the plague.

3. The people called it the Black Death, because dark marks could be seen upon the skin of anyone who was ill. It is reckoned that the Black Death killed half the people in England.

4. The reason of so great a number of deaths is not hard to find. The plague is worst in places which

are unclean; it does most harm among dirty people. And in England, for many hundreds of years, the people were dirty and their habits were filthy.

5. They did not trouble in any way to keep themselves or their houses clean. Rubbish was thrown down to rot in the house or near the door. They used rushes as a floor-covering. When the old ones were dirty and worn out, they brought in new ones and flung them down over the others. Thus pieces of food and all the dirt gathered by the old rushes lay hidden under the new. Nor was the house properly cleaned out for many years together.

6. Many of the poorest classes lived in mud huts in which there was but one opening, the door. There was no window, no chimney, no place to get light and air, or to let out smoke, except the door.

7. They took no care to keep the drinking-water clean. Very often their food was most unhealthy. No one had any fresh meat in the winter. In the autumn all animals intended for food, such as oxen and pigs, were killed, and the meat salted.

8. Now, good salt meat as a regular food is not healthy at all. And very often their salt meat was not even good. Salt was very dear and very bad, so that the meat was not properly pickled. In consequence it was often half rotten when it was eaten.



SIR HENRY PICARD ENTERTAINING THE KINGS OF ENGLAND, FRANCE, SCOTLAND, DENMARK AND CYPRUS.

From the fresco painting in the Royal Exchange, London, by permission of the Artist, A. Chevallier Tayler.

Bad food, bad air, bad water, are close friends of the plague. We cannot wonder, then, that it killed half the people of England.

9. This great loss of life made things very different for the serfs, the bondmen, the labourers. Half of the labourers were now dead, but there was just as much work to be done on the land. So there was a great call for the work of those left alive.

10. These men saw their chance, and asked for more money. Some land-owners were not willing to give more. Then their men ran away from them, and sought people whose need was so great that they were glad to give what the labourer asked.

11. We read, too, in an earlier lesson, how many serfs paid for their own plot of land by working on the landlord's farm for a number of days in the year. These serfs now began to grumble. Labour was very dear, and they wished to give money instead.

12. But the landlord would not hear of this. The old terms of payment in labour were profitable to him, and he kept the serf to the old agreement. This caused much discontent. The truth was that a strong feeling was growing up among the serfs that their landlords had no right to keep them in bondage. They longed to become free men.

THE ENGLISH LABOURERS BREAK OUT IN REBELLION.

1. On their side, the landlords became very angry with the labourers who asked for more wages. They begged Parliament to put the workpeople back in their old places.

2. A law was passed that every labouring man and woman should work for the same wages as those given before the plague. It also said that anyone who left his own part of the country to seek better wages in another should be punished. One form of punishment was very cruel. A man who tried to run away from his master and was caught was branded in the forehead with a red-hot iron.

3. This law made the people more and more angry. Year by year the discontent grew until it broke out in rebellion. This was the famous rising of 1381, known as the Peasants' Rebellion, and led by Wat Tyler.

4. In this year a new tax was laid upon the people. The poor people grumbled very much, for rich and poor had to pay the same sum, which was not at all fair. The men who were sent to collect this tax behaved very rudely, and one gave such offence in the house of a man named Wat Tyler, that Tyler struck him dead.

5. Wat Tyler's neighbours in Kent supported him, and so deep was the discontent in the country that soon a great band of labourers was on the march to London. These men were resolved to see the King and get him to promise to put things right for them.

6. As soon as it was known that the men of Kent were on their way to London, fresh bands set out from Essex, and a vast army of angry men gathered at Blackheath, outside the capital.

7. Edward III. was now dead, and the King was his grandson, Richard II., a boy of fourteen. Richard acted very bravely. He went out to meet the rebels at Smithfield, and talked with Wat Tyler, their leader. Angry words passed between Wat Tyler and the King's friends, and one of the latter, the Lord Mayor, killed Tyler with a blow of a dagger.

8. At this Tyler's men drew their bows, and shouted: 'Shoot, men, shoot! they have slain our captain!' But Richard rode up to them and promised to grant all they wished, and cried out, 'I myself will be your leader.'

9. The rebels trusted him and went home quietly. They had asked that no man should be held as a serf and bound to the land of his lord, and they believed that all would be well now. But the King did not keep his promises. Hundreds of the rebels

were seized, and hanged in chains to terrify the others.

10. But the landlords never won back their old power. Little by little the labourers gained more and more freedom, until within fifty years of the Peasants' Rebellion every serf had become a free man.

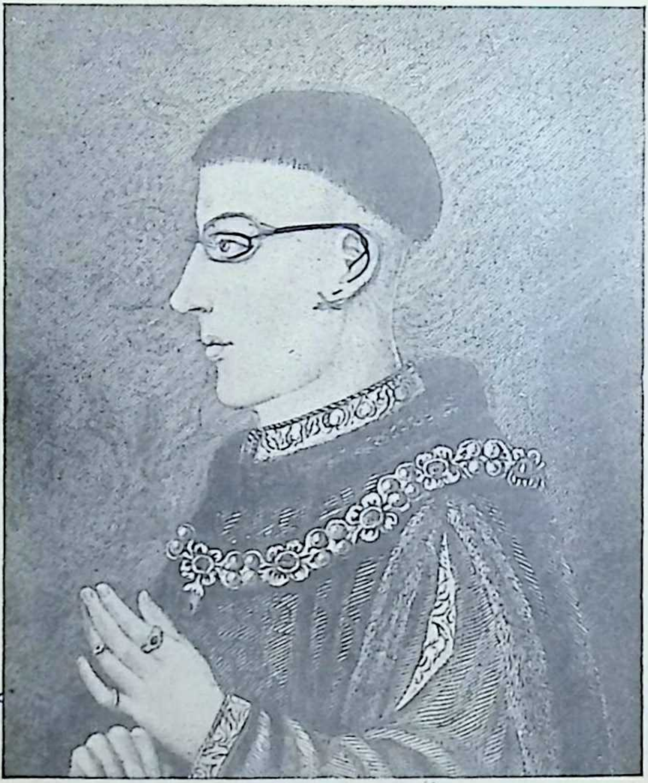
THE ENGLISH AND THE WARS OF THE ROSES.

1. The brave boy-King, Richard II., did not make a good King when he grew up. He ruled so badly that in 1399 he was turned off his throne, and shut up in a castle, where he was put to death. The new King was Henry IV.

2. Henry IV. was followed by his son Henry V., who was famous for his wars in France. In 1415 Henry won the great Battle of Agincourt, and before long he was master of a great part of France. But he died in 1422 at an early age, leaving behind him an infant son, who became King as Henry VI.

3. The reign of Henry VI. was long and unhappy. He grew up a quiet, gentle man, quite unfit to be King of England in such rude, stormy times. Later in life he became so ill that he lost his senses for long periods, and was unable to rule.

4. In the early part of his reign all the land his father had won in France was lost again. The



HENRY V.

From the picture at Windsor engraved by Greatbach.

French, aroused by a poor peasant girl, the ever-famous Joan of Arc, drove the English out of the country.

5. After the English nobles were no longer fighting abroad, they began to fight at home. Henry VI. belonged to the House of Lancaster. When he became ill and unable to rule, a powerful man, the Duke of York, head of the House of York, ruled in his stead. Next it was proposed that the Duke of York should become King.

6. But Henry's friends would not agree to this, and a fierce war broke out between the Houses of Lancaster and York. It was called the War of the Roses, because the badge of Lancaster was a red rose, and the badge of York a white rose. Many great battles were fought, and in the end the Yorkists won. The Duke of York himself was killed, but his son became King in 1461 as Edward IV.

7. In this war the English people at large took no part, and cared little which side won. It was a struggle between the great nobles and their followers. While these fought and died, the farmer ploughed his fields, and the merchant looked after his business, as though the country lay in peace.

8. It was a very cruel and savage war. When a battle was over the prisoners were often put to death. Thus, in battle or by the axe of the

executioner, almost all the great lords of the day were slain.

9. The people saw these great men fall with little sorrow. Many of them had used their power to bad ends. Each lord had a strong band of armed followers. By the help of these men a baron could ill-treat the people around him and defy the law of the land.

10. If a complaint was laid against him, he would march to the Court at the head of an army, and the King's judge dared not give a sentence except in his favour. England was a quieter place to live in after these rude, riotous men had killed each other in the War of the Roses.

THE ENGLISH BEGIN TO READ PRINTED BOOKS.

1. What kind of books did boys and girls read in those days? Why, most of them had no books to read at all. Books were too dear and too scarce. It was not until the year 1470 that a printed book was seen in England.

2. Before that time all books were written by hand on sheets of paper or parchment, and the sheets bound together. This, of course, was very slow



VISIT TO PRINTING PRESS, FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

work, and, as it took a man months to write a book, such a book cost a large sum of money.

3. So precious were these written books that people who owned them often had them fastened by strong chains, for fear someone should steal them. Very few people could read, for to read one must have books. And only the rich could pay the great sum asked for a written book.

4. In the year 1470 a man named William Caxton brought the first printing-press to England. Caxton was an Englishman who had been living abroad in a country called Flanders. There he learned to print.

5. The printing-press had been first used in Germany some years before. A clever man hit upon the idea of cutting letters on the ends of wooden blocks, one letter on each block. He took the letters to make a word and placed them together. Then he set up another word, and so on until a page was ready. He rubbed ink over the letters, and pressed a sheet of paper upon them. Now he had a page of print.

6. When Caxton brought a printing-press to England, everybody thought it a most wonderful thing. Great numbers of people went to his house at Westminster to see him work. The King, Edward IV., often went and watched the printers

turn out sheet after sheet. It seemed a marvel that a single stroke of the press should do as much work as a man could do with his hand in a whole day.

7. Caxton was not only a printer, but a writer also. He translated many books from the French and the Dutch, and printed them for his countrymen to read. He was at work in England for twenty-one years. During that time he printed nearly one hundred books. Twenty-one of these were from his own pen. He died in 1491.

8. Caxton did a great work in bringing the knowledge of printing to England. Think of what we owe to it: the newspaper, the magazine, the picture-book, books of all kinds, books to instruct and books to please.

9. To-day, thanks to printing, books are so cheap that they are within the reach of all. For a shilling you can buy a book which would have cost many, many pounds before the day of the printing-press. A copy of the Bible, which now costs a few pence, cost £20 four hundred years ago. And £20 then was equal to £200 to-day.

THE ENGLISH ENTER UPON A NEW AGE.

1. After the Wars of the Roses the English people entered upon a time of new things. New

ways of life came up; new thoughts came into the minds of men; new lands were discovered. It was the same in other countries. It seemed as if the nations of Europe woke up from a long sleep.

2. Among the new things which gave such a stir to people, the new art of printing was one of the most important. Books became much cheaper, many more learned to read, and, as they read, their minds became filled with new knowledge.

3. Then there was the new invention of gunpowder, which came into use about this time. Before the day of gunpowder, the stronger man always won in battle. Whether the fight was with sword, or spear, or battle-axe, the weaker men had no chance. But gunpowder put both on a level.

4. Again, the strong steel armour, which saved a man from the stroke of a sword or arrow, was no defence against a gun. And little by little the knights in armour lost their importance in an army, as it was found that neither their strength nor their clothing of steel could save them from a bullet.

5. New ideas arose about the shape of the world. Up to this time it was thought that the earth was quite flat. Some believed that if a man travelled far enough he would come to the edge of the world

and fall over; others that the earth was held up on the shoulders of a huge giant.

6. But now men began to push across the great seas which surrounded the parts of the world then



HENRY VIII. EMBARKING AT DOVER (SHOWING SHIPS OF THE PERIOD).

known. The most famous of these bold sailors was Christopher Columbus, an Italian. In 1492 he crossed the Atlantic Ocean and discovered America, which he called the New World.

7. Five years later a Bristol merchant, John

Cabot, crossed the Atlantic and set foot on the mainland of America. He was the first to do this, for Columbus had landed on one of the islands of the West Indies.

8. Other sailors found out the way to India by sea, round the Cape of Good Hope. This was an important discovery. Up to this time merchants had gone to India by way of the Mediterranean, and then overland. But pirates at sea and robbers by land made the journey very dangerous. The new road, though much longer, was much safer.

9. In England, the new way of life was welcomed with joy by the people. They were tired of wars, and fighting, and bloodshed. They wanted peace and quiet to look after their own affairs, to carry on trade, to make progress in industry and commerce.

10. It was not possible to enjoy either peace or quiet while the old quarrelsome nobles were fighting with each other up and down the land. But now that these men were dead in battle, or had lost their power, the government of the country became an easier task. The merchants and traders could carry on their business in safety. It was indeed a new and pleasant thing for England to be free from strife.

THE ENGLISH BECOME PROTESTANTS.

1. Henry VII., who became King after the War of the Roses was over, was never liked by his people. He was a cold, hard man, and so greedy of money that he was never tired of heaping it up. He died in 1509, and was followed by his son, who was called Henry VIII.

2. Soon after he became King, Henry VIII. married Catherine, the widow of his brother Arthur. Many years later Henry said that he thought he had done wrong in marrying his brother's widow. This was only an excuse. The truth was that he was tired of Catherine and wanted to marry another wife. But no one could give permission to do this except the Pope of Rome.

3. Up to that time the English Church obeyed the Pope of Rome, and looked up to him as Head of the Church. Henry wished the Pope to break off the marriage. The Pope would not, and the King became very angry.

4. Henry loved his own way, and was resolved to have it in spite of the Pope. So he set himself to break the power of the Pope in England. Then he could do as he pleased without asking permission of anyone.

5. In 1535 he declared that he was head of the English Church instead of the Pope. This was



HENRY VIII.
After the portrait by Holbein in Windsor Castle.

agreed to by Parliament, and from that time the Pope has had no power by law in England.

6. About that time many people were not satisfied with the Roman Catholic form of religion. Those who spoke against it were called Reformers or Protestants. Henry VIII. was never a Protestant. Although he destroyed the power of the Pope in England, he remained a Roman Catholic.

7. But great numbers of his people became Protestants, and within twenty years after 1535 the mass of the English people had become Protestants instead of Roman Catholics. This great change is known as the Reformation.

8. Before the Reformation England was full of religious houses. In these houses lived monks and nuns vowed to live a religious life, to teach and preach, to nurse the poor, to feed the hungry, to aid those who needed help. There can be no doubt that many of these monks were good people who did their utmost for the poor, the sick, and the needy. And it is just as true that others lived idle and wicked lives.

9. At the Reformation all these houses were swept away. Good and bad went together. The monks and nuns were turned adrift, and the King and his friends seized upon their property.

10. Some of the English did not change. They remained Roman Catholics, and continued to obey the Pope. These people were treated very cruelly

by the King, who became a very savage and brutal man as he grew older. Many he flung into prison, and many he put to death.

THE ENGLISH MARTYRS.

1. Henry VIII. was followed by his son, Edward VI., a boy of nine years old. This young King died when he was under sixteen. But during his short reign much was done to make England a Protestant country.

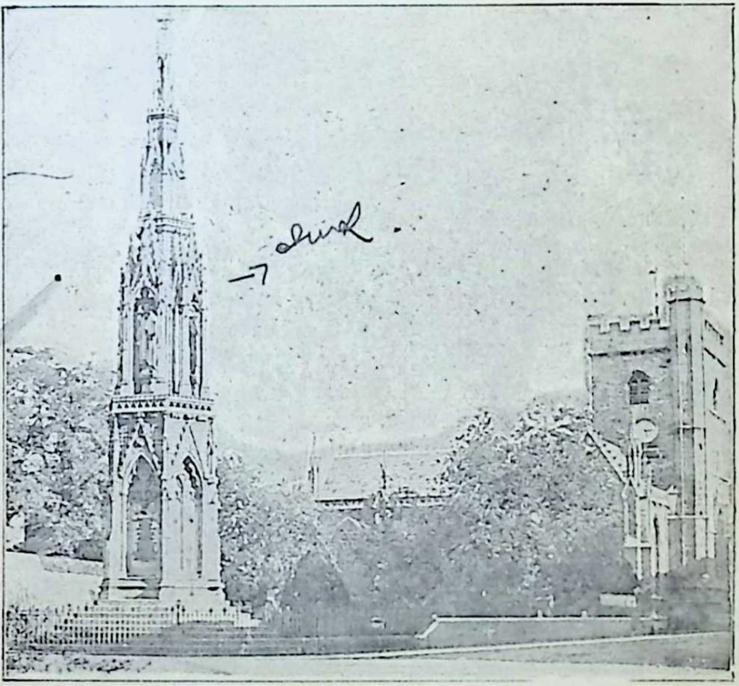
2. After him his sister Mary came to the throne, and a hard time for Protestants followed. Mary was a Roman Catholic. She had never changed her faith, and now she did her utmost to make England once more a Roman Catholic country.

3. The Protestant Bishops of the English Church were dismissed, and Roman Catholic Bishops were put in their places. But Mary went much further than that. She resolved to punish in the severest way those who would not become Roman Catholics. Within three years more than three hundred Protestants were burned to death because they refused to change their faith.

4. They were of all classes and all ages. High and low, rich and poor, men and women, old and

young, were found among the martyrs who died under Mary.

5. The most famous of them were Bishop Latimer,



W. A. Mansell and Co.

MARTYRS' MEMORIAL, OXFORD.

Bishop Ridley, and Archbishop Cranmer. Latimer was a brave, noble old man, a famous preacher, a man of good and simple life.

6. He was tried at Oxford before a council of

Catholics. In his blunt, open fashion he put by their questions. He declared he had forgotten his Latin and Greek, and the only book he had studied of late was a Testament.

7. Ridley, Bishop of London, was a great scholar. He defended himself so well that his enemies were silenced. But his learning could not save him. He and Latimer were condemned to death.

8. They were burned together at Oxford. They were fastened back to back, with bags of gunpowder about their necks. Just as the flames ran through the faggots, brave old Latimer cried out, 'Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle in England, by God's grace, as I trust will never be put out.'

9. Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, was at first unwilling to die. He signed a paper saying that he was sorry he had become a Protestant. But his enemies were resolved to put him to death.

10. When he learned this he repented that he had given up his faith. He was brought out to die, and fire was set to the pile of wood around him. As the flames leaped up he thrust his right hand among them, and cried out, 'This hand hath offended—this unworthy hand!'

11. And so he held the hand which had signed



Rischgitz Collection.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

From the engraving by Isaac Oliver.

the paper till it was burned away, and he never moved or made a sound after his first words.

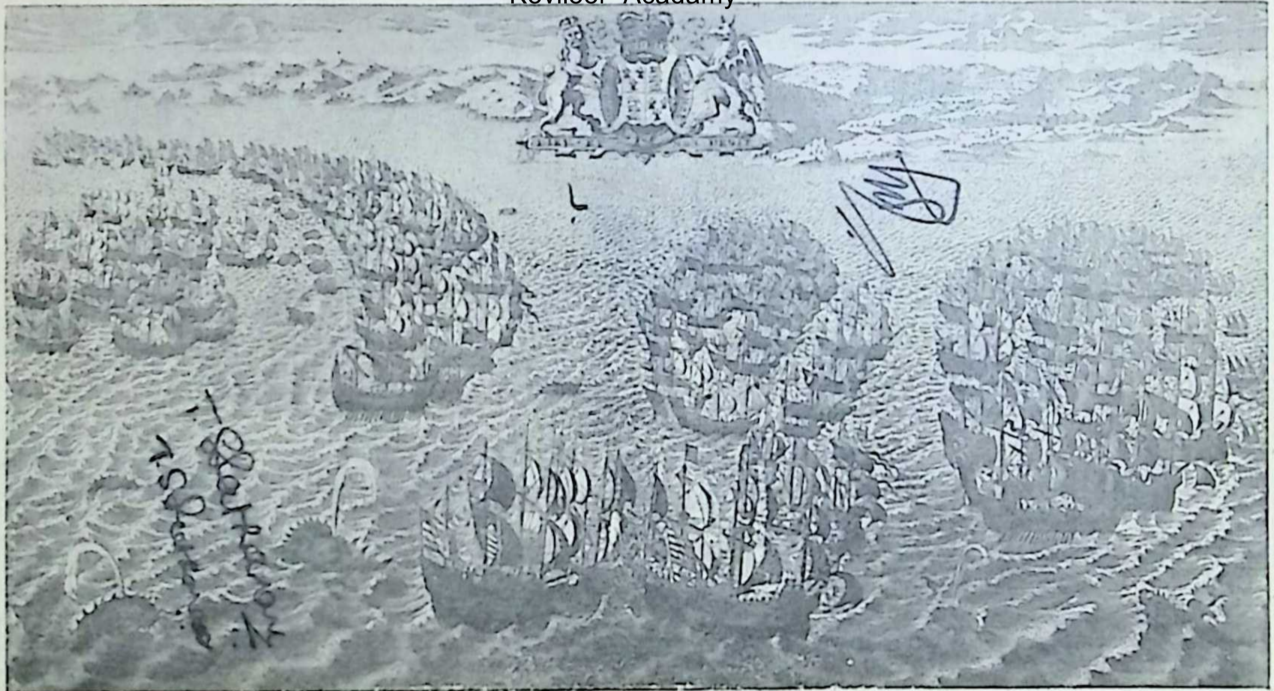
12. The death of these men had a great effect upon the country. But it was not the effect Mary wished. Many thousands became Protestants after seeing how firmly men could die for that faith. So that, in spite of all Mary's efforts, the Reformation spread more and more.

THE ENGLISH STRUGGLE WITH SPAIN.

1. When Mary died in 1558, and Elizabeth came to the throne, the Protestants were very glad, for they had now a Protestant Queen. Elizabeth had a long and glorious reign of forty-five years, a reign filled with famous names, for then lived some of the greatest men in our history.

2. For thirty years of this reign England and Spain were fierce foes. The King of Spain was a great enemy of the Protestant religion. It was known that he wished to drive Elizabeth from the throne, and set up the Roman Catholic faith again in England.

3. The English looked upon the Spanish as bitter foes, and wherever Englishman and Spaniard met, they fought out the quarrel between the countries.



W. A. Mansell and Co.

THE FIRST ENGAGEMENT WITH THE SPANISH ARMADA.

4. When Elizabeth came to the throne, America, or the New World, as it was then called, had been discovered by Christopher Columbus more than sixty years before. The Spaniards took the lead in the New World. They set up their rule over parts which were rich in gold and silver, in emeralds, pearls, rubies, and diamonds. They sent loads of these precious things across the sea in ships to Spain.

5. It was not long before the bold and skilful English seamen began to find their way to the New World also. They attacked the Spanish ships, and plundered them of their wealth.

6. The Spaniards did their utmost to drive off the English, but in vain. The King of Spain had many brave commanders, but they were no match for the mighty sea-captains of Elizabeth—Francis Drake, John Hawkins, Davis, and Frobisher, and scores of others.

7. Year after year King Philip of Spain grew more and more angry as he heard of the mischief the English were doing to Spanish ships. Hundreds of ships laden with treasure had fallen into the hands of Drake and his comrades. At last Philip resolved to invade England, and a great fleet of vessels was prepared to attack the country.

8. In 1588 the Spanish Armada set sail. The

fleet was so strong, the ships so large, and manned by such fine sailors, that it was called 'The Invincible Armada,' as if no one could overcome it.

9. The English ships met the Spaniards off Plymouth. The Spaniards were sailing towards the Straits of Dover, where a strong army of their friends was waiting on the French coast. The Spanish fleet intended to carry this army across to England and land it on our shores.

10. For a whole week there was a great sea-fight as the Spaniards moved up the English Channel. The English ships were much smaller than the huge Spanish vessels, but they were much quicker and handier.

11. They darted round the great slow Spanish ships, and sent their shot through and through them. So high were the Spanish vessels that their cannon-shot often flew clean over the English without doing any harm.

12. The fight ended in the complete defeat of the Spaniards. Of the ships of the 'Invincible Armada' many were sunk, many were burned, many were wrecked when trying to make their way back to Spain. Only a few of them ever saw home again, and they were so beaten and broken that people scarce knew them.

13. After this great victory there was no more fear of the Spaniard in England. The Spanish power upon the sea was broken for ever.

THE ENGLISH UNDER ELIZABETH.

1. During the reign of Elizabeth the English people made great progress in many ways. Trade grew rapidly. The English merchants sent their ships abroad to all countries; the workers were busy at home.

2. But we must not think of the latter as living in large towns and working in great factories, as people do to-day. There were no big towns then. Each worker carried on his trade in his own home, and in his own village. He supplied the people who lived around him, and sold his spare goods at one of the great fairs, which were often held in all parts of the country.

3. This growth of trade meant that the country grew richer, and so men began to build better houses and wear gayer dresses than before. The time of Elizabeth is famous for the fine houses which were built. Many remain to this day, and are among the grandest houses in our land.

4. Even the poorer people began to improve their



A CHRISTMAS REVEL.

From a drawing by Walter Wilson King.

dwellings. Instead of building their houses of mud or wood, they used brick and stone. They began to use chimneys. Chimneys had long been built in larger houses, but poor people had been satisfied up till now with a hole in the roof.

5. They began to furnish their houses better. People who had slept on a heap of straw, with a block of wood or a bag of chaff for a pillow, now bought bedsteads and feather beds. At dinner they ate from plates of pewter instead of wooden trenchers. They had knives to cut their meat, but they put the pieces into their mouths with their fingers, for forks were not yet in use.

6. The English of that day were very fond of merrymaking. Every village had its fair or feast, when all kinds of sports were held. May Day was a great holiday. The villagers set up a May-pole, decked it with flowers and ribbons, and danced gaily about it.

7. Christmas was another time of great merriment. The Christmas games often lasted a fortnight. Every house was decked with holly and ivy and mistletoe. There was abundance of good eating and dancing and jollity. It was the season of the year when high and low joined in the same games, and rich and poor feasted at the same table.

8. Some of the sports loved in those days were very cruel. A bull was tied to a post and baited with dogs. A bear was blindfolded and whipped, or set to fight with dogs. Men fought with each other, using sharp swords and dealing deep wounds. Ladies would go to these sights, and Elizabeth herself saw such sports with pleasure.

9. In London people were very fond of the theatre, where the play began about mid-day and lasted till three or four. The most famous plays were those of William Shakespeare, our greatest poet.

10. Of course there were not so many people in the land then as now. We are not certain how many people lived in England at that time, but very likely there are as many people in London to-day as there were then in the whole country. The great towns of the north were tiny villages or open moorland. The iron and coal which have made them large and busy places were not discovered. The north was the poorest and barest part of England.

11. Iron was made in Kent and Sussex, the smelting furnaces being fed with wood. In the west of England and in Norfolk and Essex cloth was made from wool. These were the busiest parts of the country. To-day they are among the quietest.

12. In the towns the streets were very narrow and very dirty. People had not learned the value of cleanliness and fresh air. Thus, there was much sickness, and sometimes the Plague broke out and swept off great numbers. The richest merchants kept their shops and lived above them. The shops had no windows, and were watched by apprentices, who walked up and down the pavement begging people to buy.

THE ENGLISH STRUGGLE FOR LIBERTY—I.

1. After the death of Elizabeth we come to a very important time in our story of the English people. For now began a long struggle between the King and the people, a struggle which led to a great war.

2. The new King of England was James I., the King of Scotland. Since his day England and Scotland have always had the same ruler. James was a foolish man who thought himself clever. He was very obstinate, and would not give way in anything.

3. He had an idea that a King ought to rule to please himself, and not to please his people. He said that Kings were ordained by God, and so were above the law. Subjects were to be bound by the

law, but not the King. He called this the 'Divine right of Kings.'

4. Now, it is plain that there can be no freedom in a country where the King can treat his people just as he pleases, without being called to account in any way. It is not strange, then, that the English people, who loved freedom above everything, would not agree to this 'Divine right.'

5. James soon quarrelled with Parliament. He said that members ought not to talk and argue about new laws and taxes. They ought to do as he told them. The members boldly replied that freedom of speech was their greatest right, and they would not give it up.

6. The quarrel grew deeper and fiercer when Charles I., the son of James, came to the throne in 1625. Charles was even more obstinate than James, and was filled with his father's idea of 'Divine right.'

7. He was also misled by the unwise advice of favourites, and of his wife Henrietta. She urged him to rule as he wished, and punish those who dared to oppose his will.

8. But the members of the English Parliament were now roused. They saw that if the King were not checked, English freedom would be destroyed.

They refused to grant taxes unless the King would consent to rule according to the laws.

9. Charles now tried to raise money in other ways. In doing so he broke through all laws, even those of the Great Charter itself. He demanded taxes from the people on his own authority. Men knew very well that Parliament alone had power to order the payment of taxes, and many refused.

10. Those who refused were ill-treated. Some were flung into prison and heavily fined. Soldiers were quartered in the houses of others. Men who had no money to pay fines were forced to serve in the army or navy.

11. At last a great Englishman, named John Hampden, stood up against Charles. He refused to pay a tax called Ship Money. Ship Money was an old tax paid by counties near the sea, to provide ships to defend the shore. But John Hampden lived in Buckingham, far from the sea, and he knew very well that the money would not be used for its proper purpose, and would only be used as the King pleased.

12. He was brought up and tried before twelve judges. He lost his case. Seven judges out of the twelve were against him and said he must pay. This was not according to the law. The seven judges

cared nothing for right; they only wished to please the King. Men said that no one now could expect a fair trial if the King were against them.

THE ENGLISH STRUGGLE FOR LIBERTY—II.

1. In 1642 Charles came to an open quarrel with his people. Five members of the House of Commons had spoken very strongly against his unlawful doings. John Hampden was one of them.

2. Charles went down to the House with a body of soldiers to seize the five members. But he failed, for they had gone away. This was the last stroke. If a man could not speak his mind freely in Parliament, then freedom was dead in England.

3. There was nothing for it now but war. King and Parliament must fight it out, and see which was the stronger. For the King there fought the Royalists, the lords, the gentry and their followers. For the Parliament there fought the merchants, the shop-keepers, the farmers.

4. England was split up into two parties, and Englishmen fought against Englishmen. Sometimes the members of one family took opposite sides, and father fought against son, brother against brother This was the Great Civil War.

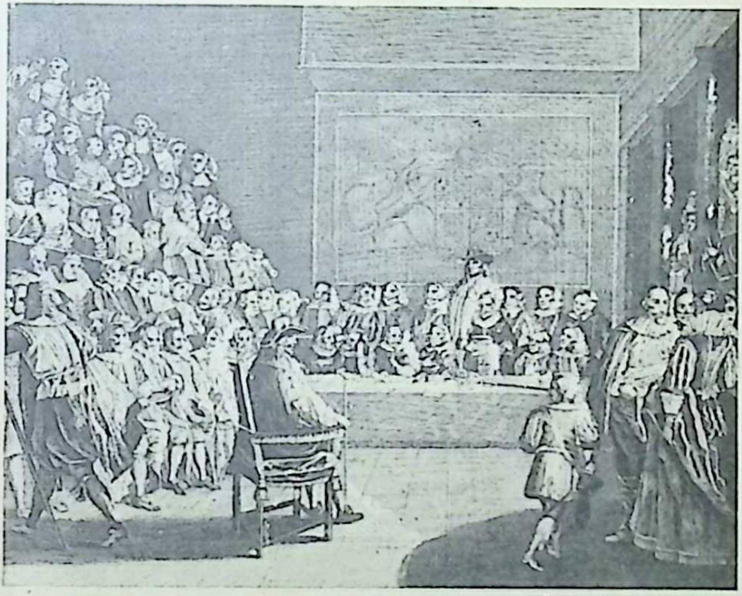
5. At first the King's party held the upper hand. They were well trained and were used to war.



CHARLES I.
After the portrait by Sir A. Vandyck.

The farmers and traders who fought for the Parliament knew very little about fighting

6. But soon there rose among the latter that mighty soldier, Oliver Cromwell. Cromwell was a country gentleman of Huntingdon, and a member of Parliament. He saw that only well-drilled troops



B. Gardner's Collection.

TRIAL OF CHARLES I.

could hope to stand against the bold gentlemen who fought for the King.

7. He gathered a number of brave, steady men, mostly farmers and farmers' sons, and formed them into a regiment. He trained and drilled them so

well that they became splendid soldiers. They won the name of the Ironsides, for nothing could shake them, and when they charged nothing could stand before them.

8. They were proved at the Battle of Marston Moor, in 1644, where the Royalists were beaten. And at the Battle of Naseby, in 1645, the Ironsides carried all before them. The victory of Naseby, won by Cromwell and his men, ended the war at a blow.

9. Not long afterwards the King fell into the hands of Parliament, and was put into prison. Here he remained for some time. But the Royalists took up arms again and again on his behalf.

10. Cromwell and other leaders said that there would never be peace in the country so long as the King lived. It was resolved to bring him to trial for causing the war, and as an enemy to the public good.

11. This was done in January, 1649. The trial lasted five days, and Charles was found guilty and sentenced to death. On January 30 he mounted the scaffold at Whitehall.

12. In this last scene of his life he acted with calm and noble dignity. A vast crowd had gathered

to see him die. He laid his head upon the block, and it was struck from the neck at a single blow. The headsman held it up, and cried: 'This is the head of a traitor.' The only answer was a deep groan from the pitying people. At this moment they forgot all his faults, and thought only of his sad death.

THE ENGLISH UNDER A REPUBLIC.

1. England now became a republic under the name of the Commonwealth. Under a republic there is no King, but the country is governed by a ruler chosen by the people. But from the first there was only one real ruler in the Commonwealth. This was Cromwell.

2. His power lay in the fact that he was supported by the army, and the army of the Parliament was master in the country.

3. After the death of Charles, the Royalists rose in Ireland, and the Scots were very angry and gathered an army. Cromwell marched first to Ireland and crushed the rising there. Then he went to Scotland in 1650, and beat the Scots at the great battle of Dunbar.

4. In the next year an army of Scots, led by

Charles, son of the dead King, marched into England and reached Worcester. Here Cromwell met them, and, with a loss of two hundred men, gained a great victory. Six thousand Scots were left dead in the fields and in the streets of the city. Charles fled for his life. After many adventures he escaped to France.

5. In 1653 Cromwell became ruler of England under the title of Lord Protector. He ruled the country until his death in 1658. Cromwell proved a very able man at the head of the kingdom. Under him England had peace, and rose to fame and power. Under him the English were strong at home, strong at sea, and strong abroad.

6. Yet the mass of the English people did not like the Commonwealth. Cromwell and his friends were men of a very strict way of life. Under their rule all the old English sports and pastimes were put down. Music, merrymaking, theatres, dancing round the Maypole, all such things were forbidden. England was 'Merry England' no longer, and this turned the hearts of the people from Cromwell.

7. In 1658 he was taken ill. He had found the task of ruling the country one of great trouble and labour, and he was worn out with care and pain. He had many enemies, and went in constant fear of

being murdered. He wore a coat of steel armour beneath his clothes. On September 3, the day upon which he had won the victories of Dunbar and Worcester, he died.

8. He was followed by his son Richard, who became Lord Protector in his place. But Richard was a quiet gentleman, and found his post too great for him. He soon gave it up. The leaders of the army once more became the masters of England.

9. This did not suit Englishmen at all. They did not like being ruled by soldiers. Many people began to turn their thoughts towards Charles, the son of their old King. This feeling grew until Charles was asked to return. He did so gladly, and came to the throne as Charles II. in May, 1660

Important.

THE ENGLISH UNDER CHARLES II.

1. The English people received Charles II. with great joy. At once they threw aside the gloom which had reigned under the stern and severe rule of the Commonwealth. They lit bonfires on every hill, and danced gaily on every village green. This feeling of gaiety went too far. Men became crazy with merriment. They sang, feasted, danced in wild riot.

2. They now had a King who set them an example

in thinking of nothing but pleasure. Charles II. was called the 'Merry Monarch.' He well deserved the name. At his Court nothing was thought of but feasts, balls, hunting-parties, card-playing, and such-like amusements.

3. But soon a black side was seen to all these gay doings. Charles spent vast sums of money on wasteful and wicked pleasures. When his own pockets were empty, he seized upon the money of the nation, and that went the same way.

4. He did the most shameful things to get money for himself and his favourites. He took bribes from a foreign King—the King of France—to act against the good of his own subjects.

5. He took the money which Parliament had voted for a war with the Dutch, and spent it in waste. Thus, England had neither ships nor sailors for the war, and the Dutch sailed up the Thames at their ease, and burned many ships. The roar of their cannon was heard in London.

6. People now began to look back on the times of Cromwell and the Commonwealth. Cromwell's rule had been stern, but it had been glorious. No enemy had dared to insult England in his day.

7. In the life of the people under Charles II., three things stood out beyond the rest: the



GREAT FIRE OF LONDON.
From the fresco painting in the Royal Exchange London,
By Stanhope A. Forbes, A.R.A.

Great Plague, the Great Fire, and the Popish Plot.

8. The Great Plague broke out in 1665. It was the same sickness as the Black Death. In six months more than one hundred thousand people died in London alone. It was not possible to bury people properly, they died so fast. Day and night the dead-cart went round with a man ringing a bell and crying, 'Bring out your dead!' When the cart was filled, the bodies were shot into a great hole and covered over with earth.

9. Numbers of people fled from London. These carried the Plague into the country, and many of the country-people perished. As the winter came on, the Plague died away.

10. Not long after, another great disaster fell upon London. In September, 1666, the Great Fire burned down a large part of the city. It broke out near London Bridge, and spread swiftly from house to house. The houses were of wood, the weather was very dry, and an east wind was blowing. Soon whole streets were burning, and the unhappy people, carrying what they could with them, were flying for their lives.

11. The fire raged for four days. It destroyed four hundred streets, more than thirteen thousand

houses, eighty-nine churches, and many fine public buildings.

12. The Popish Plot stirred all England in 1678. A man named Titus Oates came forward, and swore that the Roman Catholics were plotting to kill the King, put all Protestants to death, and bring French soldiers into England.

13. This tale was all nonsense. But the people of England disliked the Roman Catholics so much that they were ready to believe anything of them.

14. Everyone whom Titus Oates accused was seized and flung into prison. The whole nation went mad with fear. Nor did the country come to its senses until many innocent Roman Catholics had been put to death.

THE ENGLISH TURN AWAY THEIR KING.

1. When Charles II. died in 1685, his brother, James II., came to the throne. James was a Roman Catholic. And we have seen that the English people both feared and hated Roman Catholics. Still, James promised to support the Church of England, and everyone hoped he would make a good King.

2. A few months later the Duke of Monmouth, a son of Charles II., landed in the west of England.

A plot to restore the power of Pope = Popish Plot

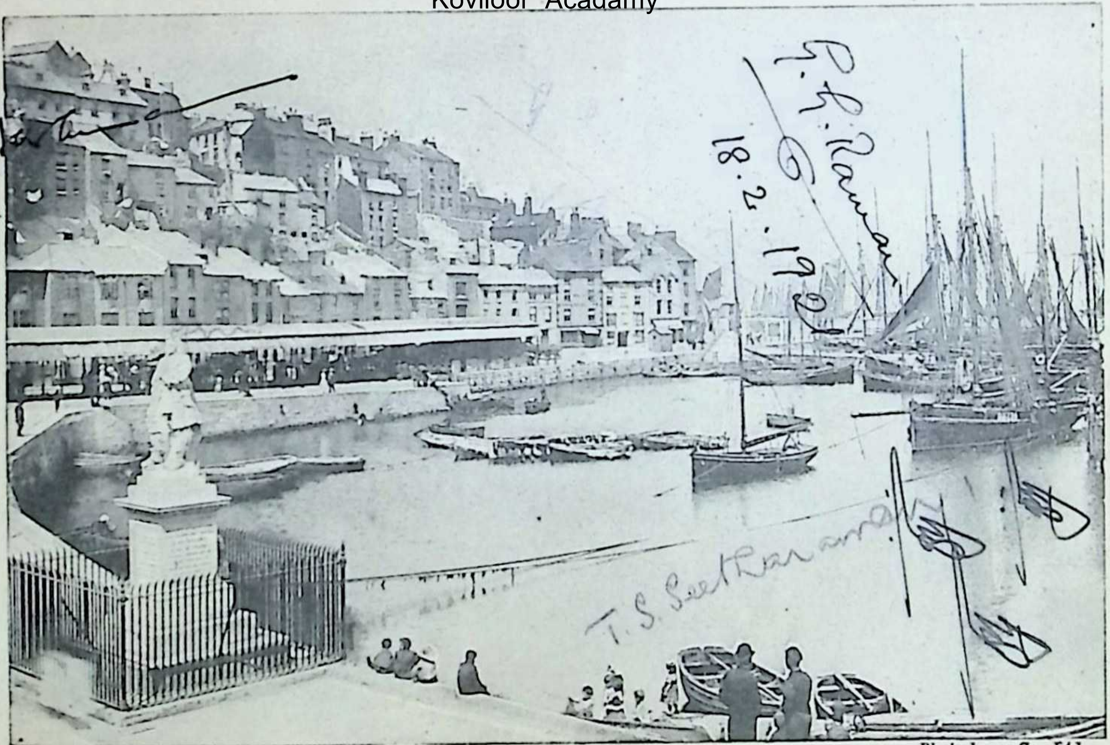
He said he had come to support the Protestant cause, and drive his Roman Catholic uncle from the throne. Great numbers of miners and farmers in the west joined him.

3. The rising failed. Monmouth was taken and beheaded, and his followers were treated in a terrible manner. Scores of the prisoners were hung at once without trial. Those who received trial were no better off.

4. There was sent down to the west country a brutal judge, Judge Jeffreys. He sentenced hundreds to be hung, and many hundreds more to be sold as slaves to the West Indies. The bodies of those hung were torn to pieces, and the heads and limbs set up about the country to frighten their friends.

5. Soon after this rising was put down, James began to show the wish of his heart. He was bent upon making England a Roman Catholic country. It was quite a vain hope. The common people, in the open streets, laughed at the idea as foolish. They said he would find that 'to drive all England into Popery would be teaching an old lion to dance.'

6. But nothing could turn James from his plans. He was a very obstinate man, and, like his father and grandfather, was full of the notion of 'Divine



Photochrom Co., Ltd.

BRIXHAM HARBOUR.

(The statue of William III. shows where he landed in 1688.)

right.' He found the laws of England stood in his way. He made up his mind to destroy the laws. Once more we see King and people at strife, and once more we shall see the people win and the King lose.

7. At that time there were laws which prevented a Roman Catholic from holding any public office in England. James said he had power to put this law aside, and he did so. He placed Roman Catholics in many offices, to the anger of the people.

8. In 1688 James issued an order that all laws which had been passed to punish those who did not belong to the Church of England should be done away with. His aim was to make things easier for his Roman Catholic friends.

9. Now to-day we have complete freedom for every man to worship as he pleases. We do not believe in such laws as those which James wished to destroy. But more than two hundred years ago the English people believed in them very strongly.

10. Still the nation remained quiet. It was known that the King's eldest daughter, Mary, was a Protestant. People had only to wait till she came to the throne, and all would be right.

11. Then in June, 1688, a son was born to James. This altered everything. The child would be brought

up as a Roman Catholic. There would be another Roman Catholic King, with fresh quarrels and troubles.

12. Mary, the daughter of James, had married a Dutch Prince—William, Prince of Orange, a Protestant. Some English leaders now sent a letter to William, asking him to come to England, to support the Protestants against James.

13. William came with an army, and many English joined him. James at first thought of fighting, but his soldiers would not fight for him. Upon this, James lost heart and fled to France.

THE ENGLISH PARLIAMENT BECOMES SUPREME.

1. When William and Mary came to the throne, the English Parliament resolved to make the English people safe for ever from a bad King.

2. A most important Act called the Bill of Rights was passed, and William and Mary agreed to it. By this Act the law was set up as higher than the King. One by one this Act spoke of all the unlawful things James II. had done, and said they were wrong, and must never be done again by any English ruler.



BATTLE OF BLENHEIM.



THE SCOTS GREYS ADVANCING TO THE ATTACK.

3. Thus the long struggle between King and people, which began when James I. came to the throne in 1603, was ended. The Stuart Kings had tried to set themselves above the law. In the end the law was set above them, and the last Stuart King was driven out of the country.

4. From that day the English Parliament has held the chief power in the land. No King has ever tried to set himself up against it. Every ruler has understood that the will of Parliament must be supreme.

5. After a few years Mary died, and William reigned alone. He spent much of his time in war with France. Louis, the King of France, was his great enemy, and William was never tired of trying to break the French King's power.

6. The English also hated and feared Louis, because he was the friend and helper of James II., whom they had driven away. Louis tried many times to put James back on the English throne.

7. William died in 1702, and Queen Anne came to the throne. In her reign also there was much fighting with Louis of France. The English army was now led by a famous general, the Duke of Marlborough.

8. He won the Battle of Blenheim and many

other great victories over the French, until at last the power of Louis was destroyed. The English people were very glad of this. There was no longer need for them to fear that Louis would force James, their former King, back upon them.

9. Queen Anne died in 1714, and now a very different race of rulers came to sit upon the throne of England. The crown passed from the Stuarts, and went to a distant relation, to George—King of Hanover, a German.

THE ENGLISH UNDER GERMAN KINGS.

1. George I., the first King of the House of Hanover, was a German and remained a German. He did not like England, and he never learned a word of English. He loved his German kingdom of Hanover better than anywhere else.

2. His son, George II., was much the same. He, too, loved Hanover better than England. Neither father nor son troubled a great deal how matters went in England.

3. This state of affairs brought about a wide change in managing the business of the country. Before this time the King had taken the chief share in all matters of government. To help him he had a number of servants called *Ministers*. And as a

rule these Ministers were the most able men of the land.

4. Under George I. and George II. the managing of the country fell more and more to these Ministers, because the King would not trouble to do the work.

5. This system of ruling by Ministers grew and grew, until to-day all power is in their hands. If something goes wrong now, people do not blame the King, as they used to do under Charles I. or James II. The blame falls upon the Ministers.

6. The plan has been found to work very well, for this reason: It is quite easy to change Ministers who do not manage well: it was not always easy to change a King. A King was only driven out after the country had suffered a great deal. But if Ministers do not rule well, the people soon send them about their business and choose a fresh set.

7. The chief of these Ministers is called the Prime Minister, and the first man to be called Prime Minister of England was Sir Robert Walpole. He took office in 1721, in the reign of George I., and ruled England for twenty-one years. He was an able man and kept England at peace.

8. This was what England needed above all. The people were tired of wars abroad and disputes at home. They wanted quietness, and Walpole gave

it to them. Men were now able to turn their minds to trade and commerce, and England soon grew much richer.

9. Walpole had no easy task to keep the country in peace and quiet. The Stuarts had still many friends. James II. was dead, but his son was alive. This was the Prince who was born just before his father lost the throne. There were numbers of people in England who wished to see him on the throne in place of George I. These people were called Jacobites.

10. Twice the Jacobites rose in arms and tried to bring the line of Stuart back to rule over England. These rebellions took place in 1715 and 1745.

They are called 'the Fifteen' and 'the Forty-five.' Both failed, and after the second in 1745 no one tried again to disturb the throne of the House of Hanover.

The battle of Plassey.

THE ENGLISH IN INDIA AND CANADA.

1. In the reign of George II. England took two great steps towards the world-wide Empire she now holds. She began to make herself mistress of India, and she seized upon Canada.

2. It is true that the English already held lands

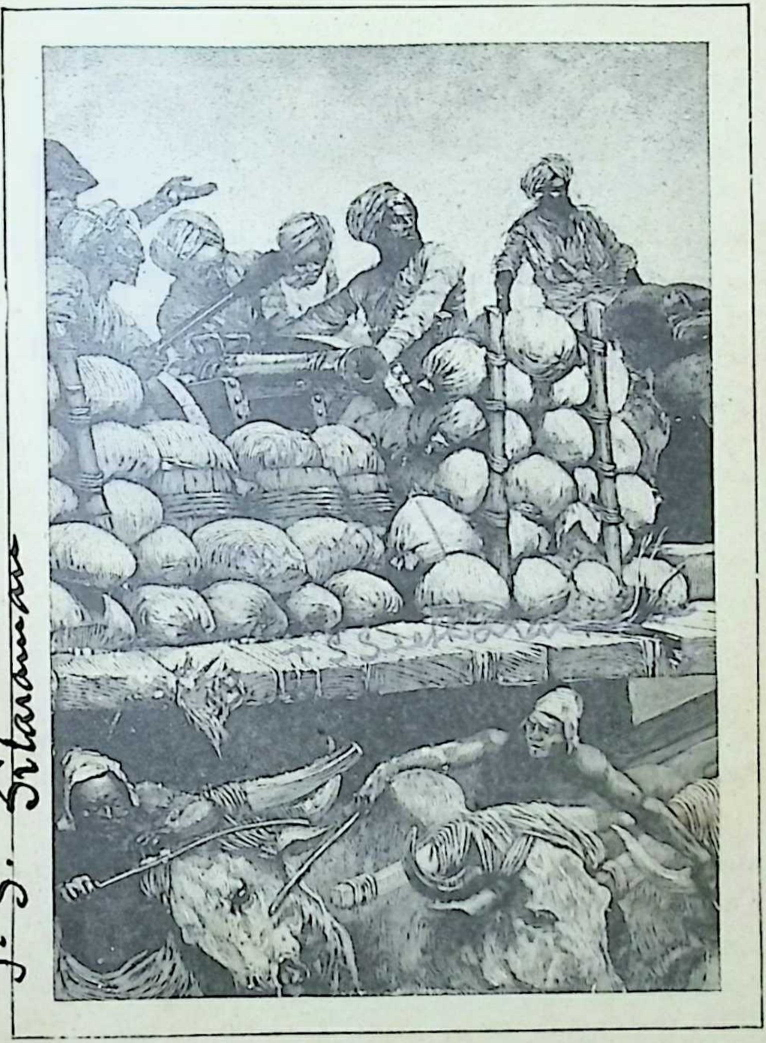
across the sea. Since the time of Queen Elizabeth they had held Newfoundland, and many English had settled on the east coast of North America.

3. The first Englishmen who went to India went as servants of the East India Company. This Company was formed in 1600, to trade with India. By the time of George II. the Company had several settlements in India where its traders lived.

4. The French were also eager to win the trade of India for themselves, and they, too, had settlements in the country. Great ill-feeling arose between English and French in India, and at last the French tried to drive the English out of the land. At first the French had the best of it, but they were soon checked by a young Englishman named Robert Clive.

5. Clive was a clerk in the service of the Company. But when fighting broke out he became a soldier, and proved himself a splendid captain and leader of men. Under him the English soon beat the French, and made themselves masters of a large part of India.

6. In 1756 Clive was called upon to fight an Indian Prince who had put to death a number of English people in a most terrible fashion. This prince, Surajah Dowlah, was the ruler of Bengal.



THE BATTLE OF PLASSEY.

The enemy's artillery on movable platforms

He seized an English settlement at Calcutta, and took one hundred and forty-six prisoners.

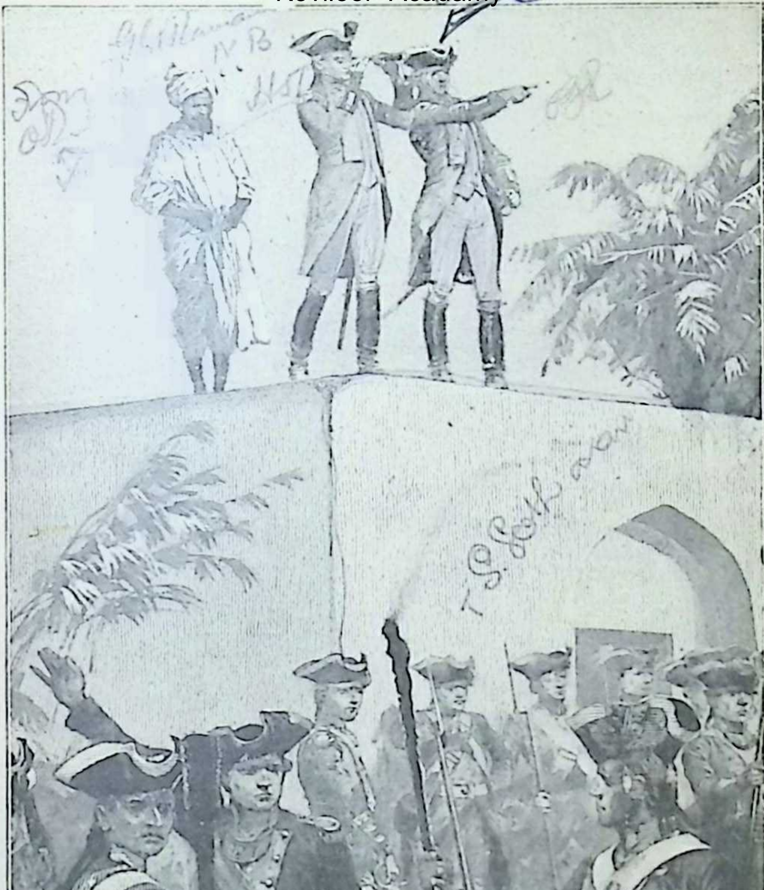
7. It was in the heat of an Indian summer, far, far hotter than any heat we ever feel in England; yet the cruel Prince shut up all the prisoners in a tiny cell about twenty feet square. The next morning one hundred and twenty-three were dead from thirst and want of air. Twenty-three were alive, and these looked like men who had risen from the dead.

8. Clive marched to Bengal to punish this cruel deed. He met Surajah Dowlah at Plassey. Clive had three thousand men, Surajah had fifty thousand. A battle was fought, and Clive's little army gained a great victory.

9. Plassey was won in 1757. It is one of the great battles of the world. It made the English masters of India, and we remember Clive as the founder of our Indian Empire.

10. On the other side of the world the English and French were fighting in Canada. At that time Canada belonged to France. In 1759 a young English general, named James Wolfe, was sent with an army to win it for England.

11. Wolfe laid siege to the capital of Canada, the city of Quebec, upon the St. Lawrence. For some



BATTLE OF PLASSEY : CLIVE RECONNOITRING THE ENEMY.

time Wolfe did not know what to do. He could not get at the French army in Quebec. The city stood at the top of lofty cliffs, so steep that there seemed no place for the English to climb them.

12. At last a rough path was found—a path so rough that the French had not troubled to watch it carefully. But James Wolfe and five thousand British soldiers made their way up it, and reached the level ground before the city.

13. The French poured out at once to fight them. The battle was short and sharp; Wolfe won a complete victory. He did not live to enjoy his success. He was wounded in three places, and died just as he knew that the French were in full flight from the field.

14. This victory made the English masters of Canada. In a short time the King of France gave up all claim to the country. It became ours alone, and so it remains to this day.

THE ENGLISH IN NORTH AMERICA.

1. After George II. came George III., and now we have a King who tried for a time to govern the country himself, just as the Kings had done in former times. But he made such an unhappy

muddle of affairs that it was plainly proved that the rule of the Ministers was the best thing for the land.

2. George III. was a well-meaning man and a good, honest man, but not at all clever. He was very obstinate, and would not give way. As he could not see far ahead, this soon brought about a great misfortune.

3. In our last lesson we spoke of the English settlements in North America. These consisted of thirteen colonies along the eastern coast. When the French held Canada, the Mother Country had to keep troops in America to defend the colonists.

4. Even after Canada was won the troops were not recalled. There were great numbers of French in the new colony, and it was feared they might rise. It was thought that the Americans ought to pay part of the cost of these troops, and taxes were laid upon them.

5. The colonists would not pay the taxes. They said that as they sent no members to the English Parliament, and had no voice in the making of taxes, it was not right to lay taxes upon them. Many people in England agreed with this view, and supported the Americans.

6. George III. and his Ministers tried to force the

Americans to pay the taxes. The colonists became very angry. One of the taxes was upon tea, and when some ships laden with tea sailed into Boston Harbour, they were attacked by a number of colonists. These men, dressed and painted to look like Red Indians, broke open the chests of tea and threw the tea overboard.

7. In a short time a war began between the colonists and the Mother Country. After some fighting the Americans broke away altogether from English rule. In 1776 they declared that they were independent, and the thirteen colonies joined to form the United States of America.

8. In the end the English troops in America were beaten. The Americans were ably led by a famous general named George Washington. They had also much help from France. In the year 1783 England gave up the struggle.

9. It is not a great deal more than a century since the United States broke away from us, but in that time they have grown into a mighty nation. Their country spreads across America from ocean to ocean, and is filled with a population made up of people from every country of Europe. They form a republic, and are governed by a President, who is elected every four years.

10. It is quite likely that this great country would have been parted from ours in any case. But much bad blood and bitter feeling would have been spared if we could have parted friends.

11. To-day England and America seem to be drawing together again. Had George III. and his Ministers not been so blind and stubborn, the Americans might never have looked upon us as enemies.

THE ENGLISH AND THE FRENCH—I.

1. Twelve years after the American War, another war with France broke out, in 1793. It lasted twenty-two years, and is, perhaps, the most important war in our history. We have read of many wars which England fought for glory or to win some land. But in this war England fought for her life.

2. In France the mass of the French people had risen against the King and the nobles, and put them to death. France became a republic. The leaders of the French people looked upon all countries still ruled by Kings as their enemies. They declared war upon country after country, until in the end all Europe was against France.

3. The chief fighting was between England and

France. In this long and terrible war battles were fought by land and by sea. At sea the British under Nelson swept all before them. On the land Wellington led British troops to victory.

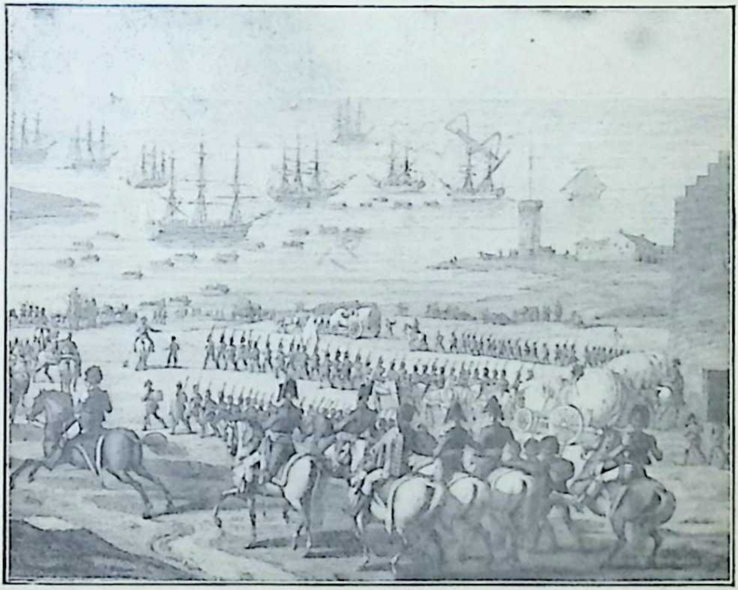
4. Among the French there rose one of the greatest generals the world has ever seen, the famous Napoleon Bonaparte. When the war began he was an officer of low rank in the army. But he soon came into notice as an able man, and his rise was very rapid.

5. In the end he became Emperor of the French, and under him the French armies attacked and overthrew nation after nation of Europe. At last the whole of Western Europe except England lay at his feet.

6. But at sea he had to own the power of England. In 1798 Nelson destroyed the French fleet at the Battle of the Nile. The great English Admiral took or burned nearly every French ship.

7. Napoleon formed many plans to invade our country. For years the people who dwelt on the coast in the south of England lived in fear that the French would land at any moment. If such a landing had been made, everyone knew what to do. The women and children were ready to fly inland; the men had weapons to go to meet the enemy.

8. In 1805 the attack seemed certain. Napoleon gathered a great army and a vast fleet of boats on the shore of France, just where the crossing is narrowest. But he dared not venture on the sea until he was sure that Nelson and the British fleet



BRITISH TROOPS EMBARKING.

were well out of the way. 'Let us be masters of the Channel for six hours,' said Napoleon, 'and we are masters of the world.'

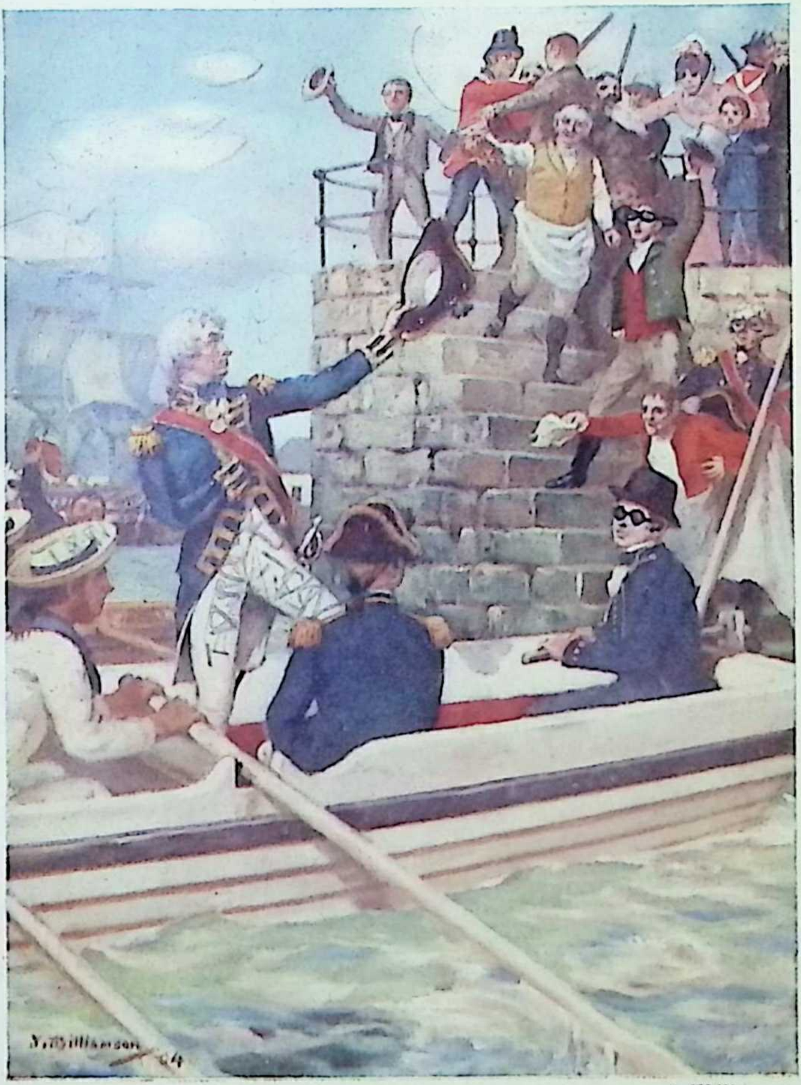
9. At that time the French and Spanish fleets

were helping each other. Napoleon ordered them to sweep the seas clear that his army might cross the English Channel in safety. They met Nelson and his ships off Cape Trafalgar, and a great sea-fight was fought. Nelson won a complete victory. The French and Spanish fleets were wiped off the face of the sea. But the English had to mourn for Nelson. The great seaman was killed at the moment of victory.

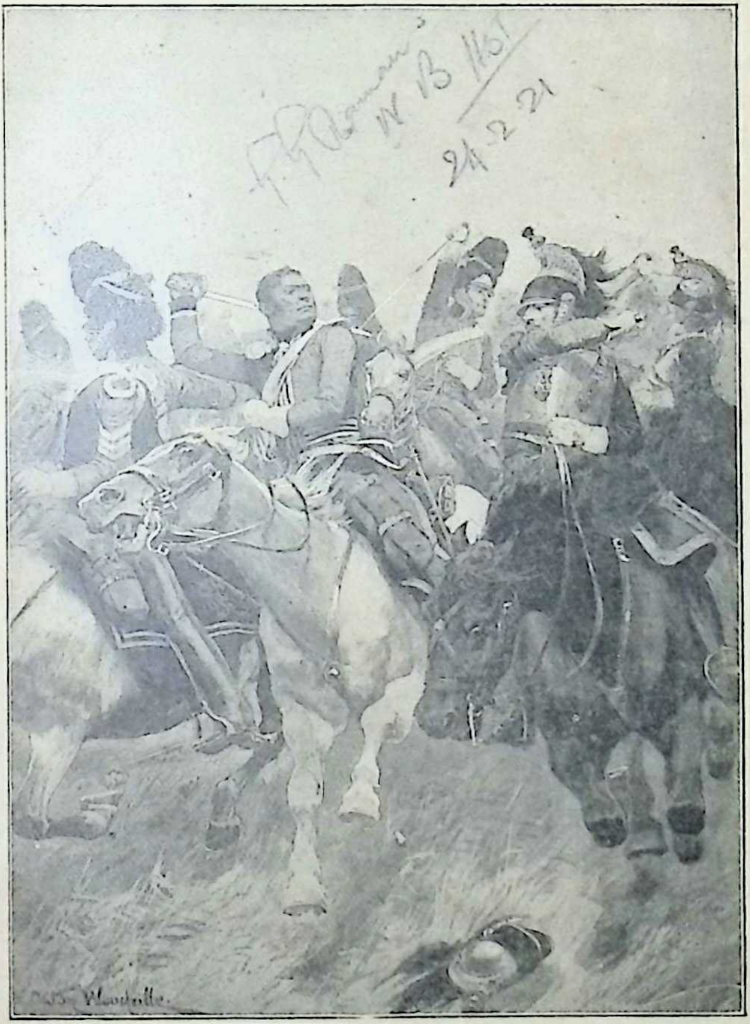
10. Thus, Napoleon never gained command of the Channel. At any moment there were English battleships ready to pounce upon his fleet of boats. He broke up the great camp and marched away. If he had crossed, he would have found a stiff piece of work waiting for him. In England four hundred thousand volunteers sprang to arms, eager to defend their island home.

THE ENGLISH AND THE FRENCH—II.

1. Three years later, a British army was sent to Spain to help the Spaniards against Napoleon. The latter had risen to greater power than ever. He had made three of his brothers Kings, and now he wished to add Spain and Portugal to his empire.



NELSON LEAVING PORTSMOUTH. *J. Williamson.*



CHARGE OF THE SCOTS GREYS AT WATERLOO.

By R. Caton Woodville.

2. For the next six years there was constant fighting in Spain between the British, led by the great English general Wellington, and the French. Wellington won battle after battle, and in the end beat the French out of Spain.

3. The year 1814 saw the British army enter France. This was the year of Napoleon's downfall. Almost all Europe had joined against him, and, after a battle in which he was beaten, he gave up his position as Emperor. He was sent to the little island of Elba, near the coast of Italy.

4. He did not stay there long. In the spring of the next year, 1815, he escaped from Elba, landed in France, and called his old soldiers about him. They came to his side with joy. With all their hearts they loved the 'Little Corporal,' as they called him. Soon he was at the head of a strong army.

5. The Duke of Wellington went to meet him at the head of seventy thousand men. Of these about half were British. A great battle was fought at Waterloo, near Brussels, on June 18, 1815. The British were very hard pressed. They had to bear the French attack almost alone. The Belgian troops, who formed a large portion of Wellington's army, broke and fled when the French came near.



THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

From the painting by Lawrence in Apsley House.

6. The British were posted along a low ridge. Wellington ordered them to hold it at all costs, and not to allow the French to drive them back. His men obeyed him in noble fashion.

7. They fell by hundreds. The French cannon tore the ranks to pieces. The French horsemen charged fiercely upon the British foot-soldiers. Attack after attack was made.

8. But all through that dreadful day the thin line of British redcoats clung to the ridge and held their own. Time after time they drove the French back. Napoleon flung upon them in vain his best and bravest soldiers.

9. Towards night an army of Prussians came up to help Wellington. When Napoleon knew that aid was at hand, he made his last effort. He had still in hand a body of splendid soldiers, men who had not fired a shot, fresh and full of fight.

10. He hurled these upon the worn-out British. The latter met these new foes with the same steady courage that they had shown all through the day. Again the French were beaten back.

11. And now Wellington gave the word to advance. The whole British line rushed forward with a loud cheer, and drove the French before

them. Napoleon saw that all was lost, and fled from the field.

12. In a short time he gave himself up. He was then sent as a prisoner to the island of St. Helena in the Atlantic Ocean. There he died six years later. The Battle of Waterloo ended the great war. After this victory the English people settled down to many years of peace.

THE ENGLISH AND THE CORN LAWS.

1. After the Great War the working people of England saw some very hard times. Trade was bad, and many people could find no work. The war had cost a great deal of money, and heavy taxes were laid upon the people to pay for it. Worst of all, food was very dear.

2. The loaf for which we now pay sixpence cost in those days one shilling and sixpence, and sometimes two shillings. Yet wages were very low. Men earned from nine shillings to sixteen shillings a week. Thus, it was not possible to get enough bread to eat, and poor people suffered in a dreadful manner. Many starved to death.

3. Bread is cheap to-day because most of the corn we use comes into the country from other lands.

The people of those lands grow so much that they can afford to sell it to us very cheaply. This means cheap bread.

4. But at the time when bread was so dear there were laws called the Corn Laws, which kept foreign corn out of England.

5. Parliament passed these laws to help English farmers to get a high price for their corn. If foreign corn came in and was sold cheaply, it was certain that no one would buy the dear English corn. So the foreign corn was kept out, and then the English farmers could get a great price.

6. These laws made food very dear. The poor people, who had not enough to eat, thought them very cruel. But the mass of the people could not help themselves; they had no votes. As long as a man has no vote, he has no voice in the making or altering of the laws.

7. The chief power in Parliament was held by people who owned a great deal of land. The Corn Laws suited them very well, because as long as corn fetched a great price they could get a high rent for their land. For this reason they would not hear a word against such laws.

8. After a time a number of men joined together to alter this. They said that it was very wrong to

make food dear, and that no people could be healthy and happy unless they had plenty of good food.

9. The year 1845 showed that these men spoke truth. In that year the potato crop failed in Ireland. Other kinds of food were dear, and great numbers of people starved to death.

10. The cry against the Corn Laws rose higher and higher. Everyone except farmers and landlords said they must go, and in 1849 they were abolished.

11. Since that time the price of corn has become lower and lower. The working classes have now far better and cheaper food than they had fifty or sixty years ago. But the cheap foreign corn has almost destroyed corn-growing in England. The English farmer now has to grow other things; corn does not pay him.

THE ENGLISH IN THE CRIMEA.

1. After nearly fifty years of peace, the English people entered upon the Crimean War in 1854. In this war England and France fought together against Russia. The Emperor of Russia wished to take land belonging to Turkey, and the English and French were resolved to prevent him from doing so.

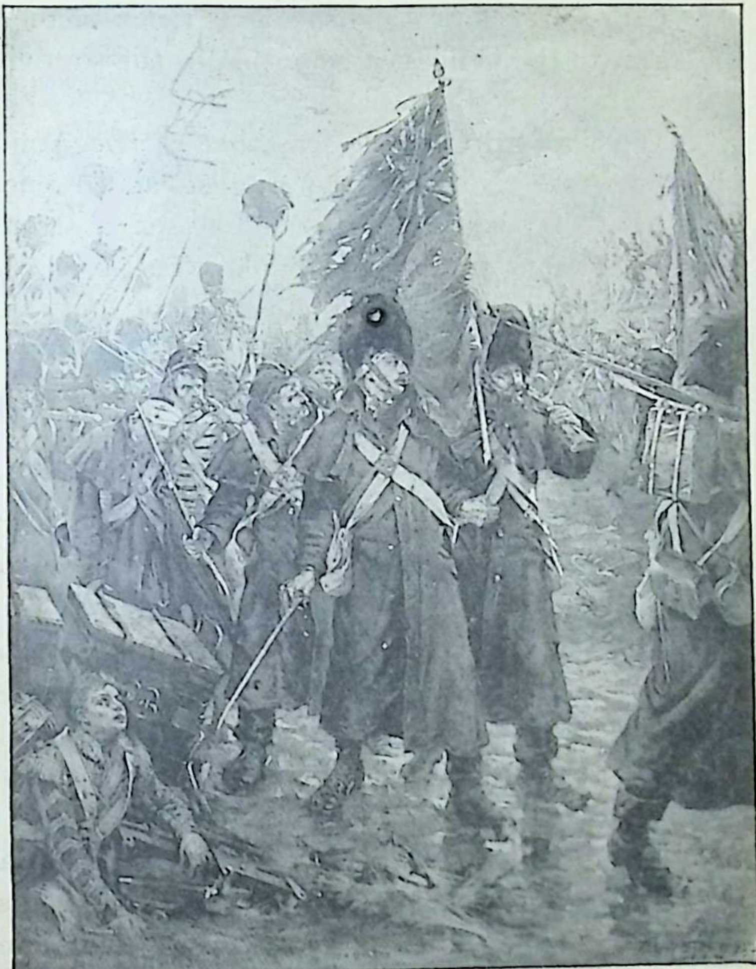
2. Large armies of English and French soldiers were sent to the Crimea, a peninsula in the south of Russia, lying in the Black Sea.

3. The first great battle was that of the Alma. The Alma is a river, and the English and French found that they had to cross it and attack a strong force of Russians on the other bank. The river was crossed under a shower of bullets and shot, and then the enemy were put to flight.

4. Soon after this there was a fight at a place named Balaklava. Upon this day was made the famous Charge of the Light Brigade. Six hundred British horsemen, owing to a mistake, flung themselves upon the whole Russian army. Only one hundred and ninety-eight came back alive.

5. The next battle was a very furious one. The English and French tried to take a town called Sebastopol. They formed a camp about it, and the English troops were posted on some high land known as the Heights of Inkermann.

6. One dark winter morning, before the day broke, a great Russian army crept upon the English camp. The soldiers sprang from sleep, and found their foes upon them. Every man did his best to drive back the enemy, and though the Russians were five to one, they were beaten after a long, hard fight.



Robert Gibb, R.S.A

THE BATTLE OF INKERMANN: SAVING THE COLOURS.

7. Soon our men had to fight worse enemies than the Russians. They were attacked by cold and hunger and sickness. Things were managed so badly that the camp was a swamp, the tents stood in pools of water, the beds were heaps of soaked straw. The men were short of food and short of clothes. Many fell sick; there were no comforts and no medicines.

8. When this became known in England, the people at home were very angry. They turned out the Ministers who had failed to do their duty, and put into power men who could be trusted to manage better.

9. A band of English ladies, led by Miss Florence Nightingale, went out to nurse the sick and wounded. Under the care of these noble women our men were soon made comfortable, and thousands of lives were saved.

10. Sebastopol was taken in 1855, and this put an end to the war. Russia gave way, and peace was made in 1856.

THE ENGLISH IN THE INDIAN MUTINY.

1. The next year, 1857, is a very black one in our history. The English people heard news from India

which filled them with grief and horror. They heard that English men, women and children had been murdered by hundreds, many of them in the most cruel manner.

2. India is guarded by white troops and by native troops. In 1857 the native troops, the Sepoys, rose upon their English masters, and there broke out that dreadful rising known as the Indian Mutiny.

3. In some parts of India there were numbers of white people living in places where there were no white troops to protect them. These people were murdered at once by the Sepoys. In other places the English gathered in a body and held out against the mutineers.

4. At two cities, Cawnpore and Lucknow, large bands of English had drawn together to fight for their lives. At Cawnpore a gallant fight was made for some time. Then a native Prince, Nana Sahib, offered to let the English go if they would lay down their arms.

5. The English agreed, thinking he was a man to be trusted. But no sooner were they in his power than the men were shot down to the last one, and about one hundred and fifty women and children were seized.

6. The latter were shut up in a small house.

Soon Nana Sahib heard that an English army was coming to release them. Upon this he sent some men to this house, and the women and children were all killed, and their dead bodies flung into a well close at hand.

7. Two or three days later a small English army, under General Havelock, marched into Cawnpore. The awful sight that met their eyes filled them with grief and rage. They burned to push on to Lucknow in hopes of saving the people shut up there.

8. At Lucknow the English were gathered in a strong building. Round this place the mutineers swarmed in thousands, and poured upon it a constant fire of cannon-shot and rifle-balls. Many of the English died of wounds, many of disease. Still they held out, fighting night and day to keep off the rebels.

9. After eighty-six days of great suffering there were signs of relief. To the joy of all, the sounds of Highland bagpipes could be heard in the distance. Havelock and his men were coming up.

10. The little army had to fight its way through two miles of narrow lanes and streets filled with foes. They were fired upon from every house, and numbers fell. But by nightfall they had reached their friends, and the English in Lucknow were saved.

11. There was much fighting in other parts of the country, but by the end of the next year the Mutiny had been put down, and the English were once more masters of the land.

THE ENGLISH AND THEIR VOTE.

1. In our lesson on the Corn Laws we saw that seventy years ago the English working people suffered under cruel laws which they could not alter. To-day they have full power to make new laws or alter old ones. This has come about because every working man now has a vote. Seventy years ago there was hardly a working man in the country with a vote.

2. We know that Parliament makes laws or does away with them. But no man can go to Parliament unless he gets a large number of people to vote for him. Thus, the people who vote can send men to Parliament who agree with them, and will do as they wish.

3. But the working classes of England have more votes than any other class, because there are more of them. So it is plain that no law is likely to be made now which would offend them. If such a law were passed, they would at the next election turn out the

men who made it, and put in others who would promise to please them.

4. The first step towards giving a vote to every head of a house was made in 1832. Before that time very few could vote. A Bill was brought into the House of Commons to enable many more to vote, and also to give members to large towns and places which had no one to speak for them in Parliament. Many large towns had no member, and so no notice was taken of what they wished. The people of these towns were very angry when they saw a little village send a member to Parliament, while they had no member at all.

5. But it was a long and hard fight before any change could be made. At last the Bill, called the Reform Bill, was carried. Now many more people could vote, and the large towns had members of their own.

6. Still many people could not vote. For instance, in towns a man had to pay a rent of ten pounds a year before he could vote. In those days rents were much lower than they are now, and the great mass of working people paid less than ten pounds in rent. These people had no vote.

7. It was not until the year 1885 that the power to vote was given freely. In this year the vote was

given to every householder. The number of voters was now three times as great as before.

8. Of what use is a vote? It is of very great use indeed. By means of your vote you have your share in the governing of your country. The men sent to Parliament by the votes of the people make laws for the people.

9. Many of the children who read this book will some day be voters. They should learn to respect their vote; it is a strong weapon in their hands for good or ill. They should learn to use their vote. A vote should never be given without thought. Do your best to find out which is the right man to receive it. Remember that it lies with the voters to choose the rulers of their country. This is a great trust. You cannot be too careful in carrying out this duty.

THE ENGLISH UNDER VICTORIA—I.

1. It is only a short time since the most wonderful reign in our history came to a close. It began in 1837, when Queen Victoria came to the throne. It ended in January, 1901, when, to the great grief of her people, the good Queen died.

2. It is wonderful for its length of sixty-three

years. It is much more wonderful for the changes which took place while she sat on the throne. Let us look at a few of these changes.

3. Nowadays there are good schools in every part of the land. In 1837 schools were very few. Among the poorer classes hardly anyone knew how to read or write. And the few schools to be found then were not such schools as you know—large buildings with maps and pictures on the walls. No; they were very often held in a small, dingy room—sometimes in a shed or cellar, where there was scarcely light for the few scholars to see their books.

4. There were very few proper teachers. As a rule, the teacher was someone unfit for active work—a man who had broken a leg or an arm, or had failed in some other business. People had not learned then that education is the most important thing in the world, and that the greatest attention must be paid to it, if a nation is not to lose its place among other nations.

5. What were the children doing who were not in school? Many were running the streets; others were at work in mines and factories. The life of many working children in those days was very hard and cruel. There were no laws to protect children as



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QUEEN VICTORIA IN 1897.

there are to-day, and the sufferings of the little workers were dreadful.

6. Children were set to work in mines at six years of age. Some of them had to open and shut doors in the mine as the miners passed through; others had to drag trucks of coal to the foot of the shaft. The latter were half naked, and were harnessed to the truck by chains, which often chafed the skin and set up cruel sores. Some of the passages were so low that the children and women who did this work had to scramble along on hands and knees.

7. The children who worked in factories were no better off. The hours were long—very often sixteen hours a day—the wages very low, the treatment very cruel. The worst off of all were the pauper children. There were men who collected children from the workhouses throughout the country, pretending to take them as apprentices. These boys and girls were taken in droves to the manufacturing towns and hired out to employers.

8. They were no better than slaves. It was stated in Parliament that they were bought and sold by employers just as slaves might be. They were fed on the cheapest and roughest food, and were forced to work to the utmost limit of their strength;

they were beaten cruelly if they failed to satisfy their task-masters.

9. Then, there were the little boys who swept chimneys. It was their task to climb up inside chimneys, clearing the soot as they went. Very often their elbows and knees were torn to pieces when climbing up the rough brickwork. The soot got into these wounds and gave rise to horrible sores. Yet, as a rule, nothing was done to cure or relieve them.

10. These boys were often kept so constantly at work that they went to sleep in the chimneys, quite tired out. Their brutal masters would then light a fire under them, so that the smoke and heat drove them out. Sometimes they were choked to death in the chimneys.

11. When Queen Victoria came to the throne many good people were hard at work trying to get these evils put down by law. And in the early part of her reign several laws were passed to better this state of affairs.

THE ENGLISH UNDER VICTORIA—II.

1. Another great change which has taken place is in our way of travelling. The railway was quite

a new thing when Queen Victoria came to the throne. Before that time people travelled in mail-coaches drawn by four horses, while the rich used their own carriages.

2. This made travelling slow work and very costly. A man who wished to go from London to Edinburgh spent three days and three nights on the road, and paid ten pounds! To-day the same journey can be made in less than nine hours, and costs one-fifth the money.

3. These prices were, of course, quite beyond the reach of poor people. If they had a journey to make, they went on foot or by the stage-waggon. This was a slow, clumsy vehicle, which moved at the rate of three or four miles an hour, and took weeks to make a journey of any length, as from York to London.

4. But very few except the rich moved about the country. In those days people lived and died where they were born. Now, by means of the railways, people can travel to any part of the land quickly and cheaply.

5. The father of English railways was George Stephenson. He was a poor boy of Northumberland. But he worked hard and learned all he could about the steam-engine. He made a railway from Liver-



J. Williamson.

THE CORONATION PROCESSION OF KING EDWARD VII.

pool to Manchester, and built an engine to run on it and draw a train. This engine was called the Rocket. To the wonder of all, it ran at the rate of thirty miles an hour. This was in 1830.

6. When Queen Victoria came to the throne it cost one shilling to send a letter across England. If it contained anything beside the sheet of paper on which the letter was written, the charge ran to a couple of shillings or half a crown. But in 1840 penny postage came in, and was received with great pleasure. It was then possible for poor people to hear from distant friends and to write to them.

7. Another great change is that which has taken place in the laws of the country. In the early part of the last century the laws were very severe, and some of them unjust. A man might be sentenced to death for a very slight offence.

8. Death was the punishment for stealing goods worth five shillings; for cutting down young trees; for stealing fish from a pond; for poaching by night; and for a hundred other offences which would now be punished by fines or by a few weeks or months in prison. These laws have been swept away, and now the punishment of death is never used except for a few very serious offences.

9. One of the most wonderful things under

Victoria was the great increase of our Empire. All through her reign new lands were added almost every year to her dominions. And great numbers of our people have gone out to make new homes in such colonies as Canada, Australia and New Zealand. In this way great stretches of country which were empty and silent wastes sixty or seventy years ago are now filled with farms and villages and busy towns.

THE ENGLISH UNDER EDWARD VII.

1. Towards the end of the reign of Queen Victoria a war broke out in South Africa between the British and the Boers, the people living in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. This war began in September, 1899.

2. At first things went very badly with us, but early in 1900 a famous general, Lord Roberts, turned the tide of success. He soon captured the capitals of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, but the war went on until 1902. In this war the Colonies showed their affection for the Mother Country by sending brave men to fight for her.

3. Early in 1901 there was great sorrow throughout the Empire. On January 22 Queen Victoria



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KING EDWARD VII.

died and her people mourned deeply for her. She had been Queen of England for more than sixty-three years, and she was beloved and respected, not only by her own people, but also by nations abroad.

4. She was followed by her son, Edward VII., who became a great King and a great ruler. He worked without ceasing for the good of his people. He knew that the greatest blessing a nation can enjoy is peace, and he strove so hard to make friends with all that he won the noble title of Edward the Peacemaker.

5. He had no easy task, for when he came to the throne England had many enemies in Europe. During his short reign he converted these enemies into friends by the sheer force of his kindly heart, his gracious ways, and the charm of his friendly manner. In his work he was greatly helped by his wife, Queen Alexandra, and no King and Queen were ever better loved by their people.

6. But, sad to say, this splendid reign was very short. Early in May, 1910, the news went abroad that King Edward was very ill, and on May 6 he died. His death, after so brief an illness, was a great shock to his people, and he was deeply mourned, for all felt that they had lost a wise and great King.

7. The greatest event of this reign was the



KING GEORGE V.

From the portrait by Hugh de T. Glazebrook.

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wonderful change which took place in South Africa. When King Edward came to the throne in 1901 Boer and Briton were locked in deadly strife; when he died, in 1910, they were friends and fellow-countrymen. The old enmity had died away, and they had clasped hands to form a new and splendid dominion of the Empire, United South Africa.

8. King Edward was followed by his son George, who now rules over us as King George V. In his first Speech to Parliament he said: "I have devoted myself to the duties to which I have been called with the earnest desire to follow in my dear father's footsteps." So began the new reign of King George and Queen Mary, under whom we now live.

THE GREAT WAR.

1. A few years after King George came to the throne there broke out the greatest war which the world has ever known. It began in 1914, when a quarrel arose between Austria and Serbia. But this was not the reason of the war. The reason was that Germany had made up her mind to become the mistress of Europe, and crush the nations whom she did not like.

2. So the Germans used this quarrel to bring

about a war into which many nations were drawn. Before long almost the whole of Europe was split up into two camps. Britain, France, Russia, Italy, Belgium, and Serbia, were on one side; Austria, Germany, Turkey, and, in time, Bulgaria, were on the other.

3. How came it that our country was drawn into the war? Did we set out to help Serbia? No, we did not. We were drawn into the war by the action of Germany. When Germany marched against France, she took the road which was easiest for her, and this lay across the small country of Belgium. But she had no right at all to enter Belgium. She had given her word that she would never do such a thing, and Great Britain entered the war in defence of this small country, so helpless before the might of Germany.

4. Now, the Germans had been making ready for this war for many years, so that at first it was very hard to stop them. They sent a strong army into France, and tried to take Paris. But they never reached that great city. A British army, under Sir John French, crossed the Channel, and came to the help of the French, and so well did the British and French fight that they beat the Germans in a great battle near Paris, and drove them back.

5. At a point about sixty miles from Paris, the Germans came to a stand, and settled down in strong trenches which they have held for many months. These trenches were extended north and south until a battle-line has been formed right across France and Belgium from the North Sea to Switzerland, a line upon which there has been constant and terrible fighting.

6. War is always a cruel and dreadful thing, but this war has been made ten times more cruel and dreadful by the barbarous doings of the German enemy. When the Germans forced their way into Belgium, they were resisted by the brave Belgian soldiers under their noble King Albert, and for a time the Belgians barred the path of the great German army.

7. In revenge for this, the Germans committed deeds which filled the world with horror. They marched across the country, burning and destroying all before them. They murdered great numbers of innocent and helpless people who had nothing to do with the war—men, women, and children. They burned people alive in their houses; they destroyed towns and villages and farms, so that vast numbers of the inhabitants had no homes left and had to fly to save their lives.

8. Many of these poor people came to our own country, and are living among us until the Germans have been driven out of Belgium. When the Germans reached Northern France they did the same. The track of their armies was marked by such scenes of destruction that no horde of savages could have left a blacker trail behind them.

9. Evil as were the deeds of the Germans on the land, they were just as evil at sea and in the air. At sea, a short end was soon made of the German power on the face of the waters. Our brave sailors swept the sea clear of every German ship; in a short time every German vessel afloat was either captured, or sunk, or shut up in some harbour.

10. The Germans had only their submarines left to fight with. They used these in such a manner as to blacken the German name for ever. For with these ships hidden under the water they sank peaceful merchant vessels without warning, and fishing vessels. whose crews were busy about their daily toil, and helpless and unarmed people were drowned in great numbers. The most dreadful example of this cruel and treacherous warfare was the sinking of the *Lusitania*, when a great steamer was sunk in a few minutes, and hundreds of men, women, and children, were drowned.

11. In the air the Germans proved as clever at foul play as they did elsewhere. They sent their great airships, the Zeppelins, over to the East Coast, and to London, dropping bombs upon towns and villages. In these raids almost all the victims were people who had nothing to do with the war—men, women, and children sleeping in their beds or going quietly about their ordinary business, people whom no civilized enemy would dream of harming.

12. In the first year of the war the Germans were filled with a great desire to get to England, and do us all the harm they could. They attacked our lines in Flanders with all their might, hoping to break through and get to Calais. But our splendid soldiers stood like an iron wall before them, and, though the Germans had much greater numbers, they were beaten back with terrible slaughter. Even if they had got to Calais, that would have been of no use to them. They would have found our mighty fleet ready for them, and barring all passage to England.

13. The British troops also fought with wonderful bravery at the Dardanelles. Turkey had joined Germany, so the British and French tried to break a way through the Straits, and seize Constantinople. They tried first by sea, then by sea and land. The

British soldiers, many of them from Australia and New Zealand, landed in face of a strong force of the enemy, and made a splendid attack upon their foes.

14. Then came a great attack upon the little country of Serbia by the Germans and Austrians, helped by the Bulgarians. The ruler of Bulgaria is a crafty and treacherous man named Ferdinand. He was a German Prince when he was chosen to rule over Bulgaria, and he has now taken the German side. In doing this he is playing a traitor's part, for his people are of the same race as the Serbians, and ought to help them. The British and French went to the aid of the Serbians, but the country was completely overrun by the enemy, and we had to retreat upon Salonika, a Greek port fortunately open to us. By their advance the Germans had obtained command of the railway running from the Danube to Constantinople, so that our gallant soldiers at the Dardanelles could now be more useful elsewhere. Their safe withdrawal was one of the most wonderful things in the whole war.

15. In the East of Europe there has been very heavy fighting between the Germans and Austrians on one side and the Russians on the other. In the late summer of 1915 the Russians were pressed back, but they are now holding their own, and in

time they are sure to get the best of it. The Italians, too, are fighting bravely in the Alps, and pushing the Austrians steadily back.

16. There is one place where the war is nearly over, and that is South Africa. A brave and clever man, General Botha, has beaten the Germans in South-West Africa and taken them all prisoners. A few years ago he was a Boer leader against us. Now he and his fellow-Boers have fought nobly for Britain, and conquered. But in other parts of the world it becomes plain that the fight will be hard and long before our strong and savage foe is beaten, and it is the duty of all Britons to do their utmost for their country.

END.

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SUMMARY.

OUR LAND BEFORE THE ENGLISH CAME.

Seventeen hundred years ago no English lived in our island. The people were Britons, and were ruled by the Romans, men who came from Italy. The Romans ruled Britain for about 400 years.

They taught the people many new ways of life, and guarded them from all enemies. They never became masters of the north of the island. Here lived fierce tribes, who were held back by great walls which the Romans built from sea to sea.

THE ENGLISH OVERSEA.

At that time the English were living in North Germany. Three tribes, the Jutes, the Angles, and the Saxons, were living about the mouth of the river Elbe. From them the English people have sprung.

The Old English were rude and savage. They loved fighting and the sea. They sailed abroad to rob and plunder, and found their way to the shores of Britain.

THE ENGLISH SETTLE IN ENGLAND.

When the Romans left Britain the English saw a good chance to seize new lands for themselves. About A.D. 450 they began to settle in Britain. The Britons fought hard, and tried to drive them away, but in vain. The English took all the land except Wales and Cornwall.

They settled down by families, a band of relations living together. They were a free people and loved their freedom. Every freeman had a right to give his opinion and his vote on such questions as peace and war.

THE ENGLISH BECOME CHRISTIANS.

The English who came to Britain were heathens. They worshipped many gods, the chief of which was Odin or Woden, the war-god.

In 596 a band of missionaries came from Rome, led by Augustine. Kent was the first part of the land to become Christian. Soon the new faith spread to other parts of the country. It was opposed most bitterly by Penda, a fierce warrior King ruling the centre of England. After he was slain in battle missionaries could enter his kingdom and preach to the people.

The last part of England to become Christian was Sussex. England was a Christian country within 100 years after the coming of Augustine.

THE ENGLISH UNDER ONE KING.

At first there was a number of Kings in England, one over each tribe. These Kings fought each other, to see who should become chief. As a rule, one was more powerful than the rest.

First the King of Kent was chief, then the King of Northumbria. Next Penda, the heathen King of Mercia, held rule. Offa, King of Mercia, was a great warrior, and became master of the country except Wessex.

After his death Wessex gained the chief power, and Egbert in 825 became the first King of England.

THE ENGLISH AND THE DANES—I.

The English were now attacked by the Danes, fierce robbers and pirates. The Danes, or Northmen, came from Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. At first they only came to rob the land and carry their plunder away. They were heathens, and loved to burn churches and kill priests. At last they began to seize the land.

The Kings of Wessex fought hard against them. Alfred the Great, King of Wessex from 871 to 901, fought many battles with the Danes. Once he had to fly before them. Then he attacked them suddenly, and won a great victory at Ethandun in 878.

After the battle he made the Treaty of Wedmore with the Danes. He gave them the north and east of England, which became known as the Danelagh, or Danelaw. He now had peace, and spent the rest of his life in good works for his people.

THE ENGLISH AND THE DANES—II.

Alfred's son Edward and his grandson Athelstan won back the Danelaw. A fresh host of Danes attacked England in the time of Ethelred the Unready, a weak and foolish King. He gave them money to go away, but that was of no use. Then he gave orders that all Danes in the country should be killed.

This was done on St. Brice's Day in 1002. But fresh hosts of angry Danes, led by Sweyn, King of Denmark, came upon the land. At last Ethelred fled to Normandy, and Sweyn was master of the country.

THE ENGLISH UNDER THE DANISH KINGS.

Sweyn soon died, and his son Canute led the Danes. Ethelred died also, and his son, Edmund Ironside, became King. Edmund and Canute fought for the crown. Canute won a great battle at Ashdown, and after that he agreed to divide England with Edmund.

Edmund soon died, and Canute was then King of all England. He was a good and wise King. He treated the English as well as the Danes. He was a friend to religion, and made rich gifts to the churches. When he died his people mourned for a great and good King.

His two sons, Harold and Hardicanute, were bad Kings, quite unfit to rule. Hardicanute died in 1042, and Edward, son of Ethelred, was made King.

THE ENGLISH AND THE NORMANS—I.

Edward was a quiet, pious man, who loved to build churches rather than rule the country. The government of the land was left to the great men, the Earls. Edward had been brought up in Normandy, and had many Norman friends. Many of the latter came to England with him. He gave them high places and showed them much favour.

The English did not like this, and quarrelled with the Normans. The leader of the English was Harold, Earl of Wessex. Harold was a strong, brave man, and was the real ruler of England.

When Edward died in 1066, Harold was chosen King of England. William, Duke of Normandy, was very angry. William was Edward's cousin, and had hoped to become King after him. William made ready to drive Harold from the throne of England.

THE ENGLISH AND THE NORMANS—II.

William of Normandy was a great soldier. He sailed for England in September, 1066. Harold was waiting for him. Suddenly Harold heard that his brother Tostig and Harold Hardrada, King of Norway, had attacked the north of England.

Harold of England marched north and overthrew Tostig and Hardrada at Stamford Bridge, in Yorkshire. Word now came that William had landed in Sussex. Harold marched back, and met William at Senlac, near Hastings.

Here a great battle was fought. Harold was slain by an arrow, and William won the day. The Norman Duke became King of England.

THE ENGLISH RISE AGAINST WILLIAM.

William had years of hard fighting before he was master of England. The English rose against him in various parts of the country. He put down risings in Kent and the west. He built a castle at Exeter to keep the west in order.

In 1069 there was a great rising in the north, assisted by an army of Danes. William gave the Danes money to go home, then laid the north waste in terrible fashion.

The last rising was in the Fens, under 'Hereward the Wake.' The English formed a camp of refuge in the Isle of Ely. Some monks showed William a secret path into the Isle, and the camp was seized. This was the last rising, and William was now master of the land.

THE ENGLISH LOSE THEIR FREEDOM.

William gave much land to his Norman followers. These men held the land on condition that they served the King in war and paid certain dues.

The Saxons, who had lived on the land as freemen, now became the slaves of a Norman lord. These slaves or serfs had to work for their master as rent for their own holdings. They could do nothing without his permission. To gain this permission they had to pay money.

William took care that taxes due to him were paid. He sent men to draw up an account of the land, and the taxes due from each place. This account was set down in the Domesday Book.

THE ENGLISH HELP THE NORMAN KINGS.

William I. was followed by his sons, William Rufus and Henry I. William and his sons had much trouble with the Norman barons. These barons wished to rule their estates as they pleased. The Norman Kings were resolved to make the barons keep the laws.

At times the barons rose against the King. Then the English helped the King to put down the barons. The English feared the barons would become cruel tyrants unless their power was broken.

The English helped Henry I. gladly, because they loved him. They helped him to beat off an attack from his brother Robert, who was aided by the barons. Henry ruled so justly that his people called him the 'Lion of Justice.'

THE ENGLISH MISERY UNDER STEPHEN.

Henry I. wished his daughter Matilda to become Queen after him. But the barons chose Stephen, grandson of William I., as King. Stephen allowed the barons to build castles as they wished. Soon there was war between Matilda and Stephen.

The barons took advantage of the troubled times to rob and ill-treat the people. They shut up in prison those who had any money, and forced them to give up their wealth. The barons burned down villages and killed people, till parts of the land became waste. Crops were destroyed, and many died of hunger. This misery lasted for nineteen years.

At last it was agreed that Stephen should remain King, but that Henry, son of Matilda, should follow him on the throne.

THE ENGLISH GAIN FROM THE CONQUEST.

In the end the English gained much from the Norman Conquest. They were made into one nation. They learned how to build better houses, eat better food, and practise better manners. They learned much about art, law, and knowledge, from the Normans. Better teachers and scholars were now found in the land.

The English language was much improved by many new words from Norman-French, the language spoken by the conquerors. For a time English and Norman-French were spoken side by side, but Norman-French died out, and all spoke English at last.

The bright, clever Normans and the strong, solid Saxons joined to form a finer race than either people had been alone.

THE ENGLISH UNDER HENRY II.

Henry II. was a great King. He loved order, and made all obey the law. He travelled up and down the country looking into things for himself and putting affairs in order. He ruled over half of France as well as England.

To help him in ruling this great realm he chose good servants. Thomas Becket was the most famous of the men who helped Henry.

The King thought the Church had too much power. He made Becket Archbishop of Canterbury, hoping that Becket would help him to curb the Church. But Becket sided with the Church and quarrelled with the King.

Soon Becket was slain by four of Henry's knights, to the grief of the hasty King. Henry died in 1189. His last days were full of sorrow.

THE ENGLISH WIN THE GREAT CHARTER.

Henry II. was followed by his sons Richard and John. Richard, 'The Lion Heart,' was a great warrior. He spent much time fighting in the Crusades, wars to rescue the Holy Land from the Turks.

John was a bad man and a bad King. He treated the people so ill that at last they rose against him, and forced him to sign the Great Charter in 1215. The Great Charter was a paper containing the laws of the land. John now bound himself and the Kings after him to observe these laws. John died in 1216.

THE ENGLISH HOLD THEIR FIRST PARLIAMENT.

John's son, Henry III., proved a weak and foolish King. He wasted money and ruled badly. He promised time and again to obey the Great Charter, but always broke his promise.

In 1265 Simon de Montfort called the first Parliament together. Members came to it from counties and towns to consider taxes and laws. The power of Parliament grew steadily. When the King asked for money, the members made him grant something to them, and little by little they gained authority.

THE ENGLISH UNDER EDWARD I.

Edward I., son of Henry III., was a very great and famous King. He was a fine soldier, a good scholar, an able ruler.

He wished to rule over the whole island, over England, Wales, and Scotland. He fought first with Wales. Llewelyn, the Welsh Prince, was killed, and Edward became master of Wales in 1283.

He had much more trouble with Scotland. He beat the Scots many times, but they would not give in. He died when marching to put them down once more. He made good laws for England, and set the law-courts in order.

In 1295 he called a Parliament, in which were found men to speak for every part of the country and for every class.

THE ENGLISH BOWMEN AND THEIR GREAT VICTORIES.

Edward I. was followed by his weak and foolish son, Edward II. The latter lost the great Battle of Bannockburn with the Scots in 1314. Edward III., son of Edward II., was a great fighting King, and began the famous Hundred Years' War with France.

Edward wished to make himself King of France. In 1346 was fought the Battle of Crecy. The French army was much larger than the English. But the latter, led by the Black Prince, won the day. In 1356 the Black Prince won the Battle of Poitiers.

These two battles were won by the English bowmen. The bowman on foot with his bow and arrows beat the great noble in rich armour on a strong horse. The knights on horseback were no longer the chief men on the battle-field.

THE ENGLISH AND THE BLACK DEATH.

In 1348 a dreadful sickness, the Plague, broke out in England. It was called the Black Death because dark marks were seen on the skin of anyone who was ill. It killed half the people in England. The spread of the Plague was helped by the very dirty habits of the people and by the eating of bad food.

The labourers who were left alive demanded higher wages, and wished to be free of bondage to their landlords.

THE ENGLISH LABOURERS BREAK OUT IN REBELLION.

The landlords tried to keep the labourers in their old places. A law was passed that men and women should work at the same wages as before the Plague or be punished. The people became more and more angry, until, in 1381, a rebellion broke out. Large bodies of men from Kent and Essex marched to London.

The King, Richard II., a boy of fourteen, went to meet them, and talked with Wat Tyler, their leader. Tyler was killed, but the King kept the angry rebels quiet by promising them what they wished. Before long the labourers gained more freedom, until at last every serf was a free man.

THE ENGLISH AND THE WAR OF THE ROSES.

Richard II. did not make a good King. He ruled so badly that he lost his throne.

He was followed by Henry IV., whose son, Henry V., was a famous warrior. The Hundred Years' War broke out again, and in 1415 Henry V. won the Battle of Agincourt. He became master of a great part of France, but died in 1422, leaving a baby son, who became Henry VI.

The latter grew up to be a weak, sickly man, quite unfit to rule. The English were driven out of France, and next began to fight at home. A war broke out between the Houses of Lancaster and York over the throne. This was the War of the Roses.

The people took little share in this war, and were not sorry when the great nobles slew each other. England was well rid of these rude, riotous men.

THE ENGLISH BEGIN TO READ PRINTED BOOKS.

A printed book was seen first in England in 1470. Before that time all books were written by hand. These written books were very dear. They were so precious that they were often fastened by chains to a desk.

William Caxton was the first English printer. He learned to print in Flanders. Many people went to see Caxton print, among them King Edward IV. Caxton not only printed books, but wrote them also. He died in 1491.

THE ENGLISH ENTER UPON A NEW AGE.

New ideas arose in the time which followed the War of the Roses, and new things were found out. Printing and gunpowder were two things which were of much importance. It was found that the earth was round, not flat, and men began to sail unknown seas.

In 1492 Columbus discovered America. The way to India round the Cape of Good Hope was discovered. A new time of peace and quietness came to England. The people were very glad of it. They had had enough of strife and bloodshed.

THE ENGLISH BECOME PROTESTANTS.

Henry VII. was a cold hard man, who loved money. His son, Henry VIII., married his brother's widow, and many years later wished to put her away. Only the Pope could give Henry permission to do this, and the Pope refused. Henry became angry, and broke the power of the Pope in England.

In 1535 he declared that he was head of the English Church instead of the Pope. England now became a Protestant country instead of Roman Catholic. This change is known as the Reformation. The religious houses were destroyed, and those people who continued to obey the Pope were treated harshly by Henry.

THE ENGLISH MARTYRS.

Henry VIII. was followed by his son, Edward VI., and Edward by his sister Mary. Mary was a Roman Catholic, and tried to turn the country once more to the former faith. Many Protestants were put to death for their religion.

Bishop Latimer and Bishop Ridley were burned at Oxford. They died bravely. Archbishop Cranmer was also burned. He had written that he was sorry he had become a Protestant. When brought to the stake, he thrust his right hand among the flames. The Reformation spread the more for the death of the martyrs.

THE ENGLISH STRUGGLE WITH SPAIN.

After Mary died, Elizabeth came to the throne. She had a long and glorious reign of forty-five years. At that day England and Spain were great enemies. The great English sea-captains attacked the Spanish ships, took them, and plundered them.

Philip, King of Spain, sent the 'Invincible Armada' to attack England. The English ships met the Armada in the Channel, and there was a week's fighting. The English won a great victory, and broke the power of Spain on the sea for ever.

X. THE ENGLISH UNDER ELIZABETH.

The English made great progress under Elizabeth. Trade grew and people became richer. They built better houses, and made them more comfortable. The English were very fond of sports and pastimes. They made merry on May Day and Christmas, but some of their sports were very cruel, such as bull-baiting, and whipping blindfolded bears.

There were no great towns in the north. Iron was made in the south, and smelted with wood. The woollen trade was the chief industry. The towns were dirty, with narrow streets, and not very healthy.

THE ENGLISH STRUGGLE FOR LIBERTY—I.

Elizabeth was followed by James I. James was foolish and obstinate. He believed he had a right to rule as he pleased. The English did not agree to this, and a long struggle began between King and people. The quarrel grew hotter when Charles I., son of James, came to the throne.

Charles raised taxes without consent of Parliament, and did many other unlawful things. He punished those who would not yield to him. A great Englishman, John Hampden, refused to pay an unjust tax. He was brought to trial, and ordered to pay the money by judges whose only wish was to please the King.

THE ENGLISH STRUGGLE FOR LIBERTY—II.

In 1642 Charles came to open quarrel with his people. The Great Civil War broke out. The lords and the gentry fought for the King; the farmers and traders fought for the Parliament.

Now Oliver Cromwell came into notice. He raised a strong body of soldiers, who won the name of Ironsides. Parliament won the battles of Marston Moor (1644) and Naseby (1645).

The King was taken and put into prison. He was brought to trial in 1649, and sentenced to be put to death as an enemy to the country. He was beheaded on January 30, 1649. He died with calm and noble dignity.

THE ENGLISH UNDER A REPUBLIC.

England became a republic, called the Commonwealth. Cromwell soon rose to chief power, because he was supported by the army. The friends of Charles rose in arms in Ireland and Scotland. Cromwell crushed the Royalists in Ireland, then went to Scotland and won the Battle of Dunbar (1650).

In 1651 Charles, son of the dead King, marched into England with an army of Scots. Cromwell beat them at Worcester, and Charles fled. Cromwell ruled the country as Lord Protector from 1653 to 1658. He ruled well, but the mass of the people disliked the Commonwealth: the rule was too strict.

Cromwell died in 1658, and was followed by his son Richard, a quiet man, who soon gave up his great post. The son of Charles I. was asked to return and came to the throne in May, 1660.

THE ENGLISH UNDER CHARLES II.

The English received Charles with great joy and merrymaking. Charles was fond of pleasure, and spent the money of the nation in wasteful amusements. He did many shameful things to get money.

In the Dutch War there was no money to fit out ships and pay sailors. Charles had spent it. So the Dutch sailed up the Thames at their pleasure, and burned English ships.

The Great Plague broke out in 1665. More than one hundred thousand people died in London alone. The bodies were flung into pits. London became so deserted that grass grew in the streets.

Next year the Great Fire broke out and destroyed half the city. But the Plague was burned out, and never came again. In 1678 the Popish Plot disturbed the country. It was said that the Roman Catholics meant to kill the King and overturn the Government. It was quite untrue, but many innocent persons were put to death on suspicion.

THE ENGLISH TURN AWAY THEIR KING.

James II. followed his brother, Charles II. The Duke of Monmouth tried to take the throne from James. There was a rising in the west of England, but it failed. Monmouth was beheaded, and his followers were punished in a terrible fashion. The cruel Judge Jeffreys sent hundreds of them to be hanged, and great numbers were sold as slaves.

James tried to make England a Roman Catholic country. This made the people angry with him, but they remained quiet, expecting that the next ruler would be a Protestant. A son was born to James in 1688, and now the English leaders asked a Protestant Prince—William of Orange, son-in-law of James—to come to England and help them. William came, and James fled, for he had no one to help him.

THE ENGLISH PARLIAMENT BECOMES SUPREME.

When William and Mary came to the throne they agreed to an Act called the Bill of Rights. This Act made it impossible for a ruler ever again to place himself above the law or above the will of Parliament. After Mary's death, William reigned alone.

There was much fighting with Louis of France, a great enemy of England. This fighting went on in the next reign, that of Queen Anne. Marlborough, a famous English general, beat the French in many great battles.

After the death of Anne, a German Prince, George, King of Hanover, came to the throne.

THE ENGLISH UNDER GERMAN KINGS.

George I. and George II. loved Hanover better than England. They took little interest in English affairs, and the rule of the country passed into the hands of Ministers. The Prime Minister is the chief man in governing the country. The first man to be called Prime Minister was Sir Robert Walpole,

who ruled England from 1721 to 1742. He kept peace in the land, and men were able to turn their minds to trade and commerce.

The son of James II. tried to take the crown in 1715, and his son tried again in 1745. Both failed, and after the second failure their friends, the Jacobites, made no further attempt against the German line.

THE ENGLISH IN INDIA AND CANADA.

In the reign of George II. England gained power in India and Canada. The English went to India as traders. The French were there also as traders, and the French tried to drive the English out of the country. Under Clive the English beat the French. A native Prince, Surajah Dowlah, seized a number of English and shut them up in a dungeon, where nearly all died for want of fresh air. Clive marched against Surajah Dowlah and won the great Battle of Plassey in 1757. This battle made the English masters of India.

The English and French were fighting in Canada as well. James Wolfe, a young English general, tried to take Quebec, the capital of Canada. After much trouble, he brought his men face to face with the French, and won a complete victory, which gave the English the command of Canada.

THE ENGLISH IN NORTH AMERICA.

George III. tried to rule for himself as Kings had done in other days, but he made a sad muddle of affairs. He and his Ministers wished the English settlers in the American colonies to pay taxes. The settlers refused because they had no word in the making of the taxes. A war broke out, and in 1776 the colonists formed the United States of America. In 1783 England gave up the struggle. The United States now form a great nation.

THE ENGLISH AND THE FRENCH—I.

In 1793 a great war began with France. It lasted twenty-two years, and was of much importance. France became a republic, and made war upon other nations. The French were led by a great general, Napoleon Bonaparte, who became Emperor of the French.

He beat nation after nation, and was eager to overthrow England. He wished to invade England, but feared the English ships of war. In 1805 Nelson destroyed the fleets of France and Spain at Trafalgar. After that Napoleon could not cross the Channel in safety. He gave up his plan of invasion.

THE ENGLISH AND THE FRENCH—II.

Napoleon rose to such power that he made his brothers Kings. He tried to seize Spain, and a British army was sent to that country to help the Spaniards. For six years the British, led by Wellington, fought the French in Spain, and in the end drove them out. In 1814 Napoleon lost his great power, and was sent to Elba as a prisoner.

In 1815 Napoleon escaped from Elba to France, and his old soldiers joined him at once. Wellington and Napoleon fought a great battle at Waterloo. The French were beaten, and Napoleon once more became a prisoner. He was sent to the island of St. Helena, where he died six years later.

THE ENGLISH AND THE CORN LAWS.

After the Great War trade was very bad and food was very dear. The price of bread was very high because of the Corn Laws. These laws kept foreign wheat out of the country, and made English wheat very dear.

The mass of the people could not help themselves against these laws, for they had no votes and no power in Parliament. The power was held by landlords who were in favour of such laws. At last some men spoke strongly against the Corn Laws.

In 1845 there was a famine, and people saw the need of cheap bread. The Corn Laws were destroyed in 1849. Food is now cheap and good.

THE ENGLISH IN THE CRIMEA.

The Crimean War began in 1854. England and France, on behalf of Turkey, went to war with Russia. The fighting took place in the Crimea, a peninsula in the Black Sea. Great battles were fought at Alma, Balaklava, and Inkermann.

The British troops suffered very much from cold, hunger, and sickness. A band of English ladies went out to nurse the sick and wounded. The town of Sebastopol was taken in 1855. Russia then gave way, and peace was made in 1856.

THE ENGLISH IN THE INDIAN MUTINY.

In 1857 the Indian Mutiny broke out. The native troops murdered their white masters, and slew women and children. At Cawnpore and Lucknow large numbers of English were shut up, and had to fight for their lives.

The English at Cawnpore were murdered by treachery, but at Lucknow the garrison held out till an army came up to save them. There was much fighting, but by the end of 1858 the English were once more masters of the country.

THE ENGLISH AND THEIR VOTE.

Eighty years ago hardly a working man in the country had a vote. Thus the mass of the people had no voice in making or altering the laws. Now the working classes have great power, because they have many votes with which to elect men who agree with their wishes.

In 1832 the Reform Bill was passed. It gave votes to many more people than before, and gave members to large towns which had not had members before. In 1885 the vote was given to every householder. A vote is a very useful thing, and should be given very carefully and after much thought.

THE ENGLISH UNDER VICTORIA—I.

Queen Victoria died in 1901, after a reign of more than sixty-three years. During this reign many great changes took place. In 1837 there were very few schools, and these were poor ones without proper teachers; now there are plenty of good schools. Then many young children were working in mines

and factories. They were treated very cruelly, working long hours on poor food, and beaten if they failed to please their harsh employers. Now young children are in school.

Chimneys were cleaned by boys who climbed up them, a dangerous business in which the boys often met with injury. Many laws have been passed to do away with such a state of affairs.

THE ENGLISH UNDER VICTORIA—II.

The railway was a new thing when Queen Victoria began to reign. Before that time people travelled in coaches drawn by horses, a slow and costly way of making a journey. Poor people went on foot or by waggon. George Stephenson built the first English railways.

In 1840 penny postage came in ; before that time a letter often cost a shilling, or even half a crown. A great change has taken place in the law. Then a man could be hanged for a very small offence ; now death is a very rare punishment.

The Empire has increased very greatly. In Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, great numbers of our people have set up new homes.

THE ENGLISH UNDER EDWARD VII.

The Boer War broke out in 1899. The Orange Free State and the Transvaal in South Africa declared war against Britain. Many brave men from the Colonies came to fight for the Mother Country, and in 1900 Lord Roberts took the capitals of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. The war was ended in 1902 and the two countries were added to the Empire.

After the death of Queen Victoria, Edward VII. came to the throne in 1901. He proved a good and wise King, and worked hard in the cause of peace. During his reign Boers and Britons in South Africa became friends, and joined to form the dominion of the United South Africa. King Edward died in 1910, and his son came to the throne as King George V.

THE GREAT WAR.

The greatest war the world has ever known is now raging. It was set on foot by Germany for her own ends ; she wished to become the mistress of Europe. Britain entered the war to protect the little country of Belgium. On the one side are Britain, France, Russia, Italy, Serbia, and Belgium ; on the other are Germany, Austria, Turkey, and Bulgaria. The fight is over on the sea ; there Britain is supreme. The battles on land are unceasing and dreadful, but our brave soldiers are holding their own everywhere, and the victory over Germany is certain. But everyone must do the utmost he can in order that the victory may come soon.

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